

WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST ON THE BIG DIVIDE;

OR, THE RAID OF THE RENEGADES *By WILD SCOUT*

AND OTHER STORIES



As Wild pressed the button a deafening explosion rang out and the air was filled with debris and the bodies of the treacherous gang. Though it had been well planned, the raid had proven disastrous to

WILD WEST WEEKLY

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Young Wild West on the Big Divide

— OR —

THE RAID OF THE RENEGADES

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

ACCUSED OF MURDER.

"We've got 'em, boys! They are ther three what killed an' robbed old Bill Sandy last night, as sure as guns! Bill's wife says one of 'em had long hair, so there's no mistake about it. These are ther three we are lookin' for."

"Gentlemen, you have made a big mistake. We are not murderers any more than you are."

The scene was in northwestern Montana among the mountains. It was a bright June day and the balmy air and bright sunshine, together with the odor of sweet-smelling flowers and the singing of the wild birds, was sufficient to make the most grouchy of mortals sit down and study Nature for a while.

The man who made the remarks at the opening of our story was a big, rough-looking fellow of middle age. He was mounted on a tough mustang of a buckskin color and sat in the saddle at the head of a dozen or more horsemen of the same type as he.

The three to whom he alluded were handsome and dashing fellows, to say the least.

Two of them were boys of nineteen or twenty and the other a man of perhaps thirty.

They all wore buckskin trousers and leggings trimmed with red fringe, and silk shirts and fancy sombreros.

The most dashing one of the three wore his hair long. It was of a chestnut hue, and as he sat there facing the muzzles of a dozen revolvers he looked like anything but one who would murder an old man for his money.

This handsome young fellow was no other than Young Wild West, the famous young scout and deadshot of the West, commonly known as the Prince of the Saddle.

The other boy, who was manly looking and muscular, was Jim Dart, and the bearded man, who was tall and as straight as an arrow, was Cheyenne Charlie, the well-known Government scout. Both he and Jim Dart were partners with Young Wild West in a rich mining enterprise in the Black Hills, and they were like three brothers.

So expert were they in the use of weapons that they could quite handily whip a dozen Indians or renegades in a square fight.

And when it came to fighting with Nature's weapons they were such up in the art, Young Wild West being a veritable phenomenon at the game.

Young Wild West and Jim Dart had few faults.

Though not given to the habit of smoking in a moderate degree, neither of them had ever tasted strong drink.

Cheyenne Charlie, like most all men of the border, liked a glass of liquor now and then, but when it came to honesty and the other qualities that make a real man he was right there.

The three had been halted by the band of rough-looking men just as they rounded a bend in the heart of that portion of country that is known as the "Big Divide."

This consists of the main range of the Rocky Mountains, and is so called because both the rivers that flow eastward to the Missouri and those that flow westward toward the Pacific start from the range.

The country was then rich in gold and silver, and is yet, for that matter, only it has taken a more civilized aspect now.

Young Wild West and his two partners were heading for a mining town called Silver Slope, where they were to meet a party of wealthy men who were about to sink shafts and develop a big mine.

The phenomenal success the partners had met with in the Black Hills in this particular line of business had caused the prospectors to make a big inducement for them to come to the Big Divide and advise them in the work.

Wild and his two friends were riding along a trail that ran along a ledge when they were halted as they rounded a bend.

It was Young Wild West who told them that they had made a big mistake when they took him and his companions for murderers.

He spoke in such a calm and easy way that some of the miners in the crowd believed him.

But the majority of them did not.

A foul murder had been committed the night before in Dustville, a shanty town six miles east of Silver Slope, and the band of rough, determined fellows, under the lead of Ripping Rube, the boss of the camp, had set out early in the morning to find the guilty parties.

"Of course you'll deny it," said Ripping Rube, for it was he who had halted the three. "It are natural for you to deny it. But there ain't no use in yer tryin' to git out of it. Ther widder seen ther ones what did ther murder, an' she said they was strangers with black masks on their faces, an' that one of 'em had long hair. If you three fellers don't tally exactly to that description, I'll chew lead for a week!"

A murmur of approbation went up from the majority of the men.

"Just take it easy, men," answered Young Wild West. "You all look as though you were intelligent enough to know that there is more than one person in the West who wears his hair long. As I wear mine that way, and we are strangers in these parts, it may make it appear to you that we are the

ones you are looking for. But you are badly mistaken. We know nothing about the crime you say has been committed; we are simply making our way to Silver Slope to meet some prospectors."

"That won't go down—not with such as us!" exclaimed Ripping Rube. "Boys, jest grab 'em an' take their shooters from 'em!"

The speaker had lowered his revolver now, and as if they thought it was all settled, the men followed his example.

Then something happened that surprised them all.

As quick as a flash of lightning, Young Wild West's hands flew up and a pair of revolvers were leveled at the crowd.

One of them was aimed directly at the heart of the leader of the gang, and when he saw it his face turned pale.

"Gentlemen, my name is Young Wild West! I never miss when I shoot. The first man who makes a move to fire will die, and when he drops your leader will drop with him! I tell you this so you may govern yourselves accordingly."

There was a ring of steel in the words the boy uttered, and for the space of a second a deathly silence reigned.

But Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart now had a brace of revolvers apiece leveled, so instead of two, there were now six six-shooters ready to spit forth hot lead.

"I told you you were mistaken, gentlemen," went on Young Wild West. "But if you think you are not, start right in to capture us. There are a dozen or more of you, and only three of us. If you want to make a fight of it, start in, I say!"

"Yes, start in, you measly coyotes!" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "There don't seem to be a man among you who has got sense enough to know that we are jest as likely to be innocent as guilty. You are a lot of hounds lookin' for some one to hang, that's what you are! My fingers is jest itchin' to git my guns to work, so start her up an' we'll show you how quickly we will thin down your crowd for you!"

"Hold on!" spoke up one of the men in the band. "You said there wasn't no one here who thinks you are jest as liable to be innercent as guilty. I say there is! My name is Tom Smud, an' I'll say that I thought ther young feller with ther long hair told ther truth when he first spoke."

A faint murmur of approval went up from three or four more of them, but the rest made no sign whatever.

Those who acted this way seemed to be more fascinated by the leveled revolvers than the others.

Probably they were wondering how it was that they had allowed the three strangers to get the drop on them so suddenly, and just when they had them dead to rights, too."

"I'm glad to hear you talk that way, my friend," said Young Wild West, speaking as calmly as though he was addressing a crowd of men who were simply out on a lark and had no intention of hanging a fellow-creature. "Since you are of the opinion that I told the truth when I said we were not the parties you were looking for, just step out of the bunch; and those who are of the same opinion had better do likewise. We do not want the blood of any such as you on our hands."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Tom Smud, as he called himself, rode his horse across the narrow trail and faced the rest of the band of men who were searching for the parties who killed and robbed old Bill Sandy.

He had scarcely taken his position when five others followed him.

"Ah!" observed Young Wild West, still keeping his revolvers leveled. "This looks more like it. Now, I will go a little further with you. I want you to take us to the widow of the man who was killed and let her say whether it was us that did it. Are there any more of you in the crowd who want to come over to our side?"

"Yes! Yes!" came the answer from all but one, while sighs of relief could be heard going up on all sides.

Then the horsemen rode over one by one, and lined up with Tom Smud, leaving one solitary man seated in the saddle on the other side.

As might be supposed, he was their leader, Ripping Rube.

"You are not satisfied to let the widow settle the question, then?" queried Wild, looking at the man sharply. "By Jove! I'll wager a gold eagle to a silver quarter that you know a great deal more about the murder than any one else here."

The face of the miner turned livid as these words came to his ears.

His men thought it was rage that caused it, but Young Wild West thought differently.

He had sized Ripping Rube up quickly and well, and he

had come to the conclusion that there was more bad than good in him; hence the remark.

The look on the fellow's face now was one of terror, not anger.

"How far is it to ther place where ther old man was killed?" Charlie asked.

"Only a little over two miles," answered Tom Smud.

"Good enough! Go ahead an' lead ther way; we'll go with you."

Those of the men who had retained a grasp upon their weapons put them back in their belts at this.

"Come on, Rube," said one. "These people are all right, or they wouldn't offer to go to Dustville an' face ther widder. Come on!"

"As I'm ther only one what's got a different opinion from yer all, I ain't goin' back with yer. You all know that I never make a mistake in a thing of this kind," answered the man.

"Well, you made a mistake this time—there has got to be a first time, you know," observed Jim Dart with a smile.

"Well, if I have, I ain't goin' to ride into camp with yer; I'll go it alone to show how I stand in ther matter."

"You will ride right along with us, my friend!"

It was Wild who said this, and there was a dangerous glitter in his handsome dark eyes as he cast a glance at Ripping Rube.

That settled it.

The leader of the band said no more.

At a motion from Young Wild West, he moved his horse alongside the magnificent sorrel stallion the boy rode, and then the march to Dustville began.

It was pretty near noon, and our three friends had been thinking of their stomachs when they were suddenly confronted by the band of men.

Now they meant to get dinner at the hotel in Dustville after they had seen the widow and established their innocence to the full satisfaction of the men.

They did not question the fact of a hotel being there, for there never was a mining camp that existed longer than two weeks without a so-called hotel was established in it.

A winding trail down the side of a mountain soon brought them in sight of a mushroom town.

There were probably forty tents in it and a dozen shanties, some of which were rather old-looking and others very new.

There were others being erected, too, and these were on a larger and neater scale.

Cheyenne Charlie rode at the head of the line at the side of Tom Smud, Jim Dart kept in about the center and Young Wild West brought up the rear with Ripping Rube.

The man who had differed with the rest was virtually the boy's prisoner, and no one knew it any better than he did himself.

It now occurred to him that he should have given in at the start, but as it was not his nature to act that way, he had not done so.

The nearer he got to the settlement the more he showed signs of uneasiness.

But Wild was watching him as a cat watches a mouse.

"If you make an attempt to get away, old fellow," thought the young prince of the saddle, "I shall certainly wing you with a bullet. When I said that you knew more about the murder than any of the rest did, I guess I did not make a mistake. I want you to go to the widow and answer a few questions in her presence."

Those of the miners who were not at work in the vicinity of the shanties and tents came out in groups to meet the horsemen, and several women and children came to the doors as they rode in.

All were anxious to learn if the murderers had been captured.

Pretty soon they came to a halt in front of the oldest and most dilapidated shanty of the lot.

"Here we are," said Smud to Cheyenne Charlie. "Here's where ther body of old Bill Sandy is lyin' with ther widow cryin' her eyes out over it."

"Get off your horse, Ripping Rube!" commanded Wild.

The miner did so, looking about as though for some avenue of escape as he obeyed.

"Now, then, I want you to take me to the widow and ask her if I am one of the three she saw when the murder was committed."

"Let Tom Smud do it; 'tain't my business to do it."

"Oh, yes, it is your business to do it. You believe I am one of the guilty ones, you know."

Ripping Rube shifted his feet uneasily for a moment. Then his hand slid for the revolver that protruded from the holster at his right side.

Wild saw the move.

"Just let the shooter alone," he said calmly. "Now, come on to the widow."

A weeping woman of sixty came out of the shanty at that moment and, taking his man by the arm, Wild conducted him before her.

"Ask her!"

There was something imperative about the command, so, clearing his throat, Ripping Rube said:

"Is this feller one of them what you seen sneakin' away from ther shanty last night?"

The woman raised her eyes, and scanning the boy closely, shook her head.

"No, he ain't one of 'em. The man who had ther long hair was about your size, Rube, an' he had boots on just like you've got," she replied.

At this a growl went up from the miners.

CHAPTER II.

WILD TAKES UP A COLLECTION FOR THE WIDOW.

Young Wild West was looking at Ripping Rube when the widow made the declaration that he was not one of those who had murdered her husband.

The miner changed color and acted very much as though he would like to get away.

"There is a possibility that I might be mistaken in what I think," thought Wild. "So I will let this fellow go—for the present, anyway."

Then aloud he said:

"Now, then, Ripping Rube, my two friends will step forward."

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart came up and stood in front of the woman.

"Were either of these fellows here last night?" he asked.

"No; I'm certain that it wasn't them that killed poor Bill. They was all as big an' stout as Rube, an' one of them had long black hair like an Injun. Their faces was covered with masks, so's I couldn't see how they looked. They was in the house when I woke up, an' when I screamed they put their knife into Bill's breast an' pushed me over. Then one of 'em went over to the loose board over the hearth an' pulled it up an' got Bill's savin's. We had nigh onto a thousand dollars, an' we was thinkin' of buildin' a better house to live in. It is hard luck, 'cause I ain't got over a dollar to my name."

"Cheer up, my dear woman," answered Wild, who felt very sorry for her. "Since I have been brought into this thing, I will stay here long enough to raise some money for you. If I can't raise as much as the villains stole from you I am very much mistaken. I can't bring your husband back to life, though, so I suppose you will be glad to receive the money to pay for burying him and to give you a start again."

"Thank you, sir! Thank you, sir!" exclaimed the poor woman, bursting into a fresh flood of tears. "May Heaven bless you for your kindness! May I ask your name?"

"I am Young Wild West, Mrs. Sandy," was the reply. "These are my two friends, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart. A band of men who were searching for the murderers of your husband met us a little while ago and Ripping Rube declared that we were the guilty parties. Just to convince him that we are not, we came over here. Now, then, I am going to take up a collection for you."

"Thank you, Young Wild West."

"Now, then, gentlemen," said Wild, taking off his hat, "there are easily fifty of you in this crowd, and you have all heard what the widow has said. You knew her husband, and I did not. You all know her better than I do, and if you think she is worthy, go deep down in your pockets. Charity is one of the sweetest and noblest words ever spoken by the human tongue. Dlp down, now! I am going to start the thing with a fifty-dollar bill."

The boy produced a wallet from an inner pocket of the coat he wore and took a bill from it.

It was a fifty, and when he had held it up so all hands could see, he deposited it in his hat.

Then he went around through the crowd, not missing a soul till he got back to the door.

Then he found that one was missing.

It was Ripping Rube.

He had sneaked off the minute the boy began talking to the widow, and he was nowhere to be seen.

Wild said nothing just then, but proceeded to count what had been put in the hat.

He was more than gratified when he found there was a trifle over eleven hundred dollars in the pile.

The miners were all doing pretty good in Dustville, and they had responded to his plea generously.

"There you are, madam," he said, handing the money to the widow. "There is a little more than you had stolen from you. Take it and use it as you see fit."

"There is only one man what didn't give," spoke up Charlie, as they walked over to their horses.

"And that one is Ripping Rube," added Jim.

"I know it," answered Wild. "Gentlemen, did any of you see where Ripping Rube went?"

"He sneaked over into ther whisky mill," some one answered.

"Ah! Well, that is just where we are bound. I want to see him, for I think he ought to contribute as much as I did toward the widow."

"He ought to," exclaimed several.

"But he are a putty close one," remarked another.

"I doubt if he would give any more'n a dollar or two," said Tom Smud, who had mounted his horse and come up alongside Wild.

"Well, I am just in the humor to make him give something."

"I suppose you don't object to me going in ther whisky mill with you?"

Smud had taken a great liking to Young Wild West, and he did not know how to express himself so he could get in the boy's good graces.

"Certainly you can go there with me," Wild answered, looking at him curiously. "Why do you ask that question? It is a public place, is it not?"

"Oh, yes! But, you see, I'd like to sorter go in as though I was one of your friends, you know. I never met a feller that I liked any better than you. You are jest ther sort, you are. You believe in what's right, an' when you said out there on ther trail that you did not know anything about ther murder, I believed you. An' I made up my mind that ther gang was not goin' to hang you till it was proved that you was guilty. I'm an honest man, Young Wild West, which is nothin' to brag on, since every one ought to be honest. But they ain't honest out in these diggin's, you know."

"Shake, Tom Smud!" and Wild put out his hand. "I guess you are one of those who are tried and true. You may count on me as being your friend."

"Thank you!" retorted the man warmly. Then he insisted on shaking hands with Charlie and Jim, after which all four rode up and dismounted in front of the saloon.

Several of the miners had got there ahead of them, and the place was pretty full when they got inside.

One of the first to fall under the gaze of Young Wild West was Ripping Rube.

He stood at the farther end of the bar in the act of raising a glass of liquor to his lips.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Young Wild West, raising his voice so everybody in the room could hear him, "is there any one here who did not contribute to the fund raised for the Widow Sandy? I don't want to slight any one, so that is why I ask the question."

"I didn't," answered the proprietor of the place. "Ther reason I didn't, though, was because I wasn't over there when ther money was collected. Here's fifty dollars, young feller."

He handed the money over and Wild took it, acknowledging the receipt of it with a "Thank you!"

Ripping Rube evidently knew what was coming, for he placed his hand in his pocket, and drawing forth a dollar, stepped over.

"Here," said he, "that is all I can afford to give."

"A dollar!" exclaimed Wild, taking the coin and holding it up so all hands could see it. "Well, Mr. Ripping Rube, if you can't afford any more than that, take it back!" and he tossed the money to him.

With a flushed face the man picked it up and placed it back in his pocket.

A hiss went up from the assemblage at this, and turning angrily to the crowd, the object of their disgust said:

"What's ther matter with you fellers, anyhow? You don't think I'm rich, do yer? Ther young feller would have taken that dollar without sayin' a word if he didn't have it in for

me 'cause I took him for one of the fellers that killed old Bill Sandy. I'll bet ten dollars that there was lots of you who didn't give more'n a dollar."

"I'll take your bet," answered Wild quietly.

Ripping Rube's eyes flashed dangerously as he turned them on the daring boy.

"Do you mean that?" he queried.

"I certainly do. Put your money in the hands of the landlord."

Though it galled him to do it, the miner took a roll of bills from his pocket and handed a ten-spot over to the man behind the bar.

Young Wild West quickly covered it.

"Now, then," said he, smiling blandly to the assemblage, "as I was the one to collect the money, I ought to know what the smallest amount I received was. The smallest contribution was two silver dollars. Who wins the bet?"

"You do," came the unanimous retort.

"All right. I'll take the money, landlord, and I'll hand Ripping Rube's ten-dollar bill to the widow and tell her it is his contribution toward the fund. Thank you all. You have done the right thing to the poor woman."

As he straightened out the bill to fold it with the fifty the proprietor had given him Wild gave a start of surprise.

And no wonder, for on the bill were the marks of bloody fingers.

"Ah!" he cried. "Ripping Rube has been dipping his fingers in blood, I guess, by the looks of the money he carries. He——"

Just then a revolver cracked in the hand of Ripping Rube.

He had aimed it at the breast of Young Wild West, but Charlie had been watching him, and with a quick move, he knocked his hand upward.

The bullet found lodgment in the ceiling and, dropping the weapon, the villain made a leap through the back door of the saloon and ran for his horse.

Young Wild West followed him to the door.

"Ripping Rube, you are a marked man!" he called out, as the rascal mounted and rode away.

There is no doubt but that nearly every man in the place would have joined in the chase after him if Young Wild West had but said the word, but when he came back and calmly ordered dinner for himself and his partners, no one made a move to leave the place.

"While dinner is getting ready I will walk over to the Sandy shanty and give the widow this sixty dollars," Wild observed, a moment later. "I want to ask her a couple of questions, anyway, for I am interested in her case now, and would like to help her find the murderers."

He went on out of the place, Charlie and Jim remaining.

Wild came back in time for dinner, which had taken about half an hour to prepare.

Nearly all the miners had gone to their tents and shanties to eat, but there were half a dozen there yet, among them being Tom Smud.

"How did you make out?" asked the latter, as our hero entered.

"Pretty good, I think. Here is the knife the murder was committed with. Does anybody recognize it?" and he held it up.

"Why, that looks like Ripping Rube's old bowie!" exclaimed the landlord. "I ain't seen him wear it in a month, but I'd be willin' to swear it is his."

"Well, I asked the widow for it, and I promised to try and find the owner of it, and when I do I will have the man who struck the blow that ended the life of Bill Sandy. It may be the property of Ripping Rube, and it may not. But in my opinion he is the man we want. I thought he knew something about the murder from the very start."

"Ther prairie jackal was headin' for Silver Slope as fast as his horse could git over ther ground ther last I seen of him," remarked the landlord. "Boys, I reckon he ought to be catshed."

The remark was filled with significance, and the rough but honest men understood.

Tom Smud led the way outside, after pausing long enough to tell Wild he would meet him later.

Our three friends then sat down to a fairly good meal and ate as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

They were used to all kinds of scenes and situations, and though they all felt sorry for the poor woman weeping by the side of her dead husband in the tumble-down shanty, they felt that they had done all they could for her, for the present, anyway.

Like Wild, Charlie and Jim had each contributed fifty dollars to the fund.

After they had had a smoke and a pleasant chat with the landlord, our friends set out for Silver Slope, where they were to meet the prospectors.

Before mounting Wild put the knife the murderer had left behind him in his saddle-bag.

He meant to have it handy when next he faced Ripping Rube.

The distance to the town they were bound for was not far, so they could easily ride over in something less than an hour.

They took it along moderate, it being a very warm day for the early season in that part of the country.

When they at length came in sight of Silver Slope they saw that it was a quiet town.

It nestled snugly on the side of a hill and was as picturesque a place as one would be apt to find anywhere in the Wild West.

As there were no railroad connections there, it was, of course, not so very densely populated.

But its every appearance indicated that it was a hustling mining town of the period.

The head man of the party who were going to sink shafts and begin operations in the vicinity was named John Castine.

If he had not offered extraordinary inducements Young Wild West and his partners would not have come out there.

The machinery to be used was the same as our friends used in the Wild West Mining & Improvement Company at Weston, so there would be no difficulty in speedily getting it in operation, since they understood the way it worked thoroughly.

The three rode into the town in their usual free-and-easy style, and being rather fancifully attired, they created no end of attraction.

There was only one street to the town, and as they rode slowly up it, Wild picked out the best-looking of the three hotels that were there and rode up to it and halted.

The sign over the door told that the place was the "Silver Star."

As luck would have it, they found the very man they were looking for inside.

He was engaged in a friendly game of cribbage with the owner of the place, and they being about the only two in the town who knew the game, they had it all to themselves.

"My name is John Castine," said the head of the company, rising from the table when he heard Wild ask the hotel clerk if he knew where such a man could be found.

"Well, I am glad that I found you so easily," replied our hero. "I am Young Wild West, and these gentlemen are my partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart. We came according to agreement."

"Good! I did not expect you so soon. Roby, we will postpone our game till some other time. I have important business with these gentlemen."

"Go on an' finish your game," spoke up Charlie.

"No, no; business before pleasure always."

"That is a good motto to follow," laughed our hero.

"Yes; I find it so. Wait till I get my horse, and we will ride over to the spot we are operating. It is about two miles to the east of the town."

"Very well, Mr. Castine."

It did not take Castine long to get his horse, and then, after lighting fresh cigars, the four mounted and rode over the ridge of the outskirts of the town to a decidedly wild-looking place in the mountains.

Wild found that the machinery had been there some time, but no one had been willing to have it placed in position till they had consulted somebody who knew just how it operated to the best advantage.

Our three friends looked it over carefully, and at the end of an hour Wild informed Castine that there would be no trouble about it at all, and that he would go right ahead at superintending the job as soon as he got the men there.

"To-morrow morning, then," said Castine.

"That will suit me."

As Wild spoke he suddenly caught sight of a man sneaking behind a pile of rocks a few yards away. It was Ripping Rube.

CHAPTER III.

RIPPING RUBE JOINS AN ORGANIZATION.

When Ripping Rube ran out of the hotel and mounted his horse, he was expecting every minute to get a bullet.

He had fired his revolver at Young Wild West because he had lost all control of himself.

As he really was the murderer of old Bill Sandy he would have made his case much better if he had given some sort of an explanation as to how the ten-dollar bill became stained with blood.

But there was little coolness in his temperament.

He got mad quickly and usually made a fool of himself when he did, as he was a rank coward at heart.

When the villain found that he was not being pursued he wondered not a little, but felt overjoyed withal.

He kept on riding as fast as his horse could go until he had covered three miles on the road to Silver Slope.

Then he slackened the hot pace, and turning upon a path that led up the mountainside to the left, brought his horse down to a walk.

"I'm settled, as far as goin' to Dustville is consarned," he muttered. "That Young Wild West must be a sort of fortune-teller; he seemed to read right in my face that I was ther one what struck old Bill Sandy. Oh! if that friend of his hadn't knocked my arm when I shot! Then I would have had ther satisfaction of knowin' that I'd dropped ther most nervy chap what ever come to ther Big Divide."

Having relieved himself of these thoughts, the villain gave a nod that was half satisfaction and half doubt.

He rode on along the path for a couple of hundred yards and then came in sight of a lone shanty that was built against a bank in a sort of lean-to fashion.

A chimney of mud and sticks ran up on the outside, and the smoke that came from it told quite plainly that cooking was going on in the house.

The shanty was unlike any other building in that section in the pattern and manner of its construction. It looked more like a shanty such as are found in the East at the outskirts of the big cities.

There was a flock of chickens roaming around it and a cow and a pair of goats were grazing near by.

"Hello, Mike!" called out Rube, as he brought his horse to a halt within a few yards of the door.

"Hello, yourself!" came the quick reply, and then a young man, who was plainly a native of Ireland, showed himself.

"What are yez after doin' here?" he questioned in surprise.

"I came over to tell you that I am suspected of killin' old Bill Sandy last night."

"Hist! Yez mustn't talk so loud. Come on insoide. Pat is there, an' ther ould lady is croonin' to herself in her favorite corner."

Rube dismounted and tied his horse to a handy sapling.

Then he followed the Irishman inside the hut.

A man who was the exact counterpart of Mike looked up when they came in.

He was Mike's twin brother Pat, and the two were as much alike as a couple of peas.

They looked alike, their talk was alike, and their tastes were the same; and last, but not the least, they were both renegades, both being deserters from the United States Army.

The old woman who sat in a corner softly crooning and staring about in a vague way was their mother.

She had completely lost her mind now, but when she followed her twin boys to the West she was quite rational at times.

As bad as the sons were, they had a great love for their mother, and when they had built the shanty in that lone spot they had provided her with the small comforts such as she had been used to seeing before she left the Emerald Isle with her husband and babies to better their condition in the great country across the sea.

But her husband had gone to the bad early during their married life and his career had wound up by his being hanged for committing murder.

Since that time the woman had never been herself, and finally when her two sons grew up and followed in the footsteps of their father she began to pine and long for the home she left in Ireland.

When Mike and Pat enlisted in the army and were sent to the frontier she worked until she had saved enough to come out and join them.

And when she found them they were deserters and fugitives from justice.

But they had changed their name from O'Shaughnessy to Collins, and finally had selected the spot half way between what were now the towns of Silver Slope and Dustville and erected the lean-to shanty.

Here they kept the old woman with her cow and goats and

chickens, while they robbed and plundered all they came across.

And so sly were the twins that they had never been caught.

It was they who had planned the robbery of Bill Sandy, and as Ripping Rube had told them how easily the old man could be robbed, he, of course, joined them in the villainous scheme.

But Rube was not satisfied with getting the few hundred dollars; he had to overstep the mark and stab the old man, when there was no occasion for it.

Rube took a seat at the table, which was spread with meat, potatoes and bread, and being hungry, accepted the invitation to eat.

While the meal was in progress he told all that had transpired that morning.

"I thought I had the thing fixed just right so they would never think I had a hand in it," he said. "We found them three strangers, an' it struck me right away that if they was lynched, everybody would have been satisfied that ther murder was avenged."

"But the three were too much for ther whole crowd of yez, were they?" asked Pat.

"Yes, that Young Wild West is the quickest feller I ever seen."

"Bad cess to him!" said Mike. "We are not after wantin' ther loikes of such as him around these parts. He will make trouble for us if he is not after bein' checked."

"It is trouble he'll make, so he will," chimed in the brother.

"We'll have to try an' put him out of ther way, that's all," remarked Rube, scratching his head.

"An' ther partners he is after havin' must go ther same way, bedad!"

"Sure."

"Well, we will be after foindin' a way to do it. But now I will tell yez somethin' that will make yez heart feel glad, an' ye will not feel so bad about bein' compelled to lave Dustville."

"What is it?" and Ripping Rube looked at the twins eagerly.

"We have been after joinin' an organization this mornin' that yez shall become a member of, too."

"What kind of an organization is it?"

"An organization for ther plunderin' of mankoind in gineral. Ivery man that belongs to it must be a rinegade of some sort. He must have committed some croime an' be a fugitive from ther law. I guess ye have enough recommendation, Rube. Yez did somethin' last noight that ought to pass yez through without ther laste bit of trouble."

"Yes, I reckon I did," said the miner, not the least abashed. "Where is this gang operatin'?"

"Nowhere at present—that is, not collectively. Ivery mimber must work alone an' for himself till ther new moine over here beyant gits in operation. Thin, whin they have stowed a pile of gold away to await ther toime of takin' it to the smelting works ther gang of renegades will be after gittin' in their foine work. We will git enough in one haul to last us for siveral years, an' if we have to skip ther country it will not be so bad, in that case."

"That's so. When kin I jine this renegade gang?"

"In a few minutes, if yez loike. We have headquarters roight here."

"What!"

"I don't mane in this hut— Well, niver moind. Yez will have to be proposed an' accepted first."

Pat got up and put on his hat.

Then he went out by the back door of the hut.

The old woman now got up from the rocker she had been sitting in and came over and sat down at the table.

She drank her cup of tea and ate what she wanted, and then proceeded to clear away the remains.

Mike was gone fully half an hour, and when he came back he was accompanied by a stranger.

That is, he was a stranger to Rube, for he had never seen him.

The man was attired in overalls and jumper and looked as though he might be employed around machinery, by the grease on his hands and face.

Such was indeed the case, for he was a machinist in the employ of the company headed by John Castine.

This man, though he had performed honest labor on and off all his life, did not like that way of earning a living.

He preferred to get rich from the earnings of others.

He had served a term in a prison for being connected with a bank robbery in his native town, and when he had accepted the job to come to the Big Divide he had done so because he thought there would be a chance for him to steal the gold that others dug out of the ground.

It was only the night before that he had formed an organization of ten men of the same habits and desires as he, only they were less intelligent than he; and he purposed to clean out the treasure house of the Good Will Mine, as the owners called it, as soon as enough gold was stored there to make it worth the while.

This shrewd villain bore the name of Lon Morley.

He had become acquainted with the twin brothers during the week he had been idling about Silver Slope, waiting for the machinery to be put up, and he had sought them out that morning for the purpose of getting them to join his gang.

They made it an even dozen, and when Mike came to them to the cave that was in the rear of the barn and told those present that he had another good man to join them, it took them some time to decide to take him in.

He would make thirteen, and the majority of them were superstitious fellows.

But Morley finally settled it by saying that they had better take him in, as they needed such men as Mike said the candidate was.

He told them that thirteen was a lucky number more than it was unlucky, and cited a few cases he knew of to prove it.

So when he came to the hut with Mike he came to get Rippling Rube's signature to the rules and regulations of the organization, and then to conduct him to the cave that was hidden behind the little cow-stable, or barn, as the twin brothers called it.

"Well, Rube," said Mike, "I have been after makin' it all right. This is ther captain."

"I hear you wish to join our secret organization?" questioned Morley, looking the villain in the eyes.

"Yes," was the reply. "I don't dare to go back to Dustville—leastwise, not when any of 'em there kin see me. An' I s'pose it will be ther same way in Silver Slope. That feller Young Wild West means me, I guess."

"Well, if you join our band you will be pretty well protected, I guess. I have heard of Young Wild West. He is the fellow the bosses sent after to come and show them how to put the crusher in and fix the rest of the machinery. They say he is as smart a young chap as can be found in the West, and that he is awful handy with a shooter."

"He kin draw one quicker than anything I ever seen. I thought I was putty handy at that game, but he kin git ther drop on a feller after ther feller has got ther drop on him. That sounds funny, but it's so."

Morley smiled.

"I am not much with a gun or pistol," he retorted, "but there are men in our organization who are. Come on! We will put you through our initiation and make you a member before the men go away."

Rube got up, and then all four of them left the house and walked to the barn.

Once inside the little structure a bandage was placed over the miner's eyes, and then with a measured tread they led him through a narrow doorway back of the building.

Pat opened the door and went on in, and Mike stayed behind to follow them and close it behind him.

Through a short passage they went into a cave that was lighted by a couple of lanterns.

There were seven or eight men waiting there, and when they saw the blindfolded candidate approaching they broke into grins.

The twin brothers conducted the candidate to the center of the cave, which was very irregular in shape, and in some places the rough ceiling almost touched his head.

Then Morley stepped upon a box, and in a sepulchral voice said:

"Stranger, is it your desire to become a member of this organization, which is yet without a name?"

Rube answered yes, though he thought it rather a foolish question since he had already signed the by-laws and rules and regulations.

"Are you willing to take upon yourself a solemn, binding oath never to reveal any of the secrets of the organization?"

"Yes."

Then an oath was administered to him, the penalty of violating it being instant death.

After this Morley, still in the disguised voice, continued:

"Are you willing to stand the test that makes a brother of the organization perfect in the eyes of his fellows?"

"Yes," answered Rube, though he shrugged his shoulders rather uneasily.

"Tis well! Men, place him on his back!"

Many willing hands seized the miner and placed him on his back upon the ground.

Then the bandage was removed from his eyes, and the first thing Rube saw was a heavy axe slowly descending toward his throat.

He gave an involuntary cry and hastily rolled over out of the way.

"Does he act the part of a brave man, my brothers?" questioned Morley.

"No!" came the unanimous response.

"Place him back in position again."

The axe now hung suspended by two ropes about three feet from his throat.

Ripping Rube was placed so the sharp blade was directly over his throat.

As he looked at the axe he saw that one rope was attached to the handle close to the blade and the other at its extreme end.

That made it swing steadily.

Though a little nervous, he now felt that it was simply a trick that was being played on him, and he resolved to do just as he was told.

He knew he was among friends, and therefore he would not be harmed.

When he had remained perfectly still for a moment Morley again spoke.

"Do you see this rope?" he asked, leaning over the prostrate man.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Reach out your left hand and grip it carefully, but firmly."

Rube obeyed.

"Now, then," went on the leader of the band of men, "you hold in your hand the rope that keeps the axe suspended over your throat."

A deathly silence followed, and in the dim light made by the lanterns it could be seen that Rube's face was very pale.

"Here is a keen knife!" exclaimed Morley, handing it to him. "It is my command that you cut that rope and let the axe descend upon your bare throat!"

"Do you mean that?" gasped the miner, his hand that held the knife trembling violently.

"I mean it."

"But it will surely cut my throat."

"What care you for that? Haven't you just sworn to die for the organization if commanded to do so?"

"Y-e-s, I guess I did swear that."

"Well, it is my command that you cut the rope and let down the axe!"

Rube made a spasmodic move with the knife, but did not come within several inches of the rope.

Some of the men broke into a laugh.

"Silence!" commanded the captain.

The laughing made Rube think that it was only all a joke, after all.

He resolved to cut the rope the next time he was told.

"Brothers," said Morley, speaking in his severest tone, "what do you think of the man who has applied for admission to our organization?"

"He is a coward!" came the unanimous response.

"No, I ain't a coward," said the miner. "I'll cut ther rope, if ther axe comes down an' cuts my head off!"

"Spoken like a true man. Now, when I count three, cut the rope. Hold your knife in readiness."

Rube's courage began to ooze from his finger ends again, and his arm trembled when he held out the knife.

"One!"

A cold sweat broke out on the brow of the villain who had so cruelly murdered an old man the night before.

"Two!"

His whole body shook as though he was suffering from an attack of the ague. The shaking of the rope made the axe quiver ominously above his throat.

"Three!"

Zip! went the knife, severing the rope, and down came the handle of the axe with a thud on the hard floor of the cave.

With a frightened yell on his lips, Rippling Rube rolled away from the spot.

Then every one in the place broke into a laugh.

The twin Irishmen came over and lifted the new member to his feet.

"It is all right," they said. "Ther rope you cut was only after lettin' ther handle down. Ther axe could not fall. bedad!"

Rube was so unnerved that he could not speak.

One of the members handed him a bottle of whisky a moment later, and when he had swallowed some of its contents he began to come around again.

"Jove!" he exclaimed. "I was sure I wouldn't git hurted, but I could hardly bring myself to cut that rope, for all that. It was ther awfulest thing I ever went through. Wouldn't I like to see Young Wild West go through that thing, only that it be rigged so that the axe would cut his head off."

"We may have a chance to give him a taste of it," replied Morley. "Come, Rube, I want you to go over to the new mine with me, so I can give you an idea of what is in the wind. A walk in the open will do you good now."

The two did walk over to the new mine, and just as they got there they saw Castine, the head of the concern, and Young Wild West and his partners approaching.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FRIENDS TAKE IN A SHOW.

"There goes the man we are looking for!" cried Wild, as he caught sight of Ripping Rube disappearing behind a rock.

"Where?" asked Cheyenne Charlie, excitedly. "I don't see no one."

"Ripping Rube just sneaked past that open spot over there and went behind that big rock."

Wild did not wait any longer, but, revolver in hand, bounded for the spot.

Charlie, Jim and Castine followed him.

Our hero reached the rock in less than ten seconds.

But when he got there not the least sign of a man could he see.

But there were plenty more big rocks scattered about, and he began making a search for the villain.

The others joined in the hunt, of course, but when fifteen minutes had been spent they were forced to give it up.

"If you are certain you saw a man," spoke up Castine, "he must be well acquainted around here, or he could never have disappeared so quickly."

"I saw him," Wild declared. "I never make a mistake in a face. It was quite a few yards off, but it was Ripping Rube, the miner who tried to shoot me over in Dustville this noon, that I saw, just as sure as we are standing here."

"Well, you may run across him later on."

"I want to come across him—badly, too, for I am positive he is the man who murdered an old man over in Dustville last night."

"Well, you should be careful how you tackle such a fellow as that."

"Oh, I am used to tackling such fellows as he. I would be willing to face two or three of them if I had my revolvers with me," and the young prince of the saddle smiled in his easy way.

"I have heard that you are a wonder with the revolver," Castine observed.

"Well, I don't know about me being a wonder. I suppose there are plenty of men who can shoot as straight as I can."

"But not so quick and straight at the same time," spoke up Charlie, who was ever ready to put in a word of praise for his young friend.

"That is right," Jim admitted. "Wild has no equal at quick shooting with a revolver. Why, this morning when we were held up by this man he just saw, who had twelve or fifteen at his back, and every one of them pointing their shooters at us, Wild worked it so that he got the drop on the whole crowd and made them do just as he wanted them to. It was wonderful, and when I realized it my breath was nearly taken away, for I could not see how we were possibly going to get out of the scrape."

"I wish I knew more about shooting than I do," said Castine, as he looked admiringly at the young deadshot.

"I will give you a few lessons before we leave here, if you desire," Wild answered.

"If I desire! Well, I guess I will be glad of the opportunity. You can give me a short lesson now, if you will."

"Certainly. Now just imagine that stone with the crack in it over there was a man who was sneaking up on you to down you. Pull out your revolver and let me see how quickly you can shoot and hit it."

Castine made a grab for his shooter, got a little rattled as he pulled it from his hip pocket in such a hurry and then fired a shot.

The bullet struck another rock that was four or five feet to the left of the one he shot at.

"That is the way that most men shoot when they open fire on a man in a hurry. Here is the way I do it."

Before Castine was aware of it Young Wild West had drawn back his revolver and two reports sounded as one.

There was the mark of two bullets on the rock, too, the

furthest one being within a couple of inches of the crack in the center of it.

"Whew!" gasped the head of the mining concern. "I never saw anything like that before."

"Now, you try it with one shooter, a little slower this time."

Castine put his weapon back in his pocket, and then when Wild gave the word, jerked it out and fired.

Though he went slower at it this time, he did not hit the rock, though he came pretty close to it.

"The trouble with you is," said our hero, "you try to raise your revolver to get aim. That is not the way to do it. Keep your eye right on the spot you want to hit, and when you pull your shooter throw it well up in the air and pull when you bring it down to the point you are looking at. There is no such thing as taking aim in quick shooting, any more than the aim that a boy takes when he throws a stone at a bird."

"I see," exclaimed Castine. "But that sort of shooting requires a whole lot of practise."

"Of course it does. But when you once know how to go at it, it will come all the easier."

"Well, since you have given me the idea of it, I am going to practise every chance I get. It has been my ambition to become a good revolver shot for a long time. Now, here goes for another try at that rock."

He fired quickly this time, and the bullet went over about a foot.

"That's good!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "He's got his eye on ther up-an'-down line."

"That was very good," Wild observed.

"All's he wants to do is to learn to judge ther line from right to left," resumed Charlie.

"How are you fellows on shooting in this fashion?" asked Castine, turning to Jim and the scout.

"Oh, we can do it pretty fair—about as good as the average man, I guess," answered Jim. "We are not up to Wild, though. No one is that I have seen. I will show you what I can do."

He did show him, and he hit the rock at the first shot.

Then Charlie tried it and did the same.

"You are three remarkable fellows," said Castine, as they walked over to where they left their horses standing.

"Well, I have an idea that we will have some quick shooting to do, if there are any more such fellows as Ripping Rube hanging around here," declared Young Wild West, as he mounted his sorrel steed to ride back to the town.

"Yes," answered the head of the mining company. "But I hope there won't be many such as he to bother us. We know there is lots of gold deposits here, and we want to get the stuff out quickly; that's why we bought this machinery."

"Well, I guess in a week's time we will have the machinery in operation."

"I hope so."

The ride back to the hotel was soon made, and after Castine saw that our three friends were furnished with good accommodations at the place he resumed his game of cribbage with the proprietor.

"Well, what do you think of Castine, Wild?" Jim asked, as they strolled out to take a look around the town.

"A very fine fellow," was the reply. "He says he believes in business before pleasure, but I hardly think he does, though. There are lots that he could be looking after up at the mine, instead of whiling away his time at cribbage."

"It strikes me that way, too."

"Well, I reckon you'll find him there when ther time comes, to shuffle out ther ore and crack it up," Charlie ventured.

"No doubt of it."

"Say, what's that place down ther street with ther big red sign in front of it?"

"I don't know. Suppose we go down there and see?" answered Jim.

"I am satisfied. Come on!" and Young Wild West led the way.

When they got down a little further they saw that it was a concert hall.

The big red sign announced that the best show anywhere in the Big Divide was to be found there, and that the admittance was but fifty cents.

"Let's go in," said Charlie, who was always ready for anything like a show.

Wild and Jim were agreeable, so they bought tickets and went inside.

They found themselves in a long, narrow room with a low ceiling.

The atmosphere was so thick with tobacco smoke that they

could barely discern the little stage at the farther end of the hall.

There were probably fifty men of all classes sitting on rough board seats drinking and smoking and watching the performance that was going on.

An orchestra of three pieces furnished the music, and though it was not very classic, it was inspiring to the rough cowboys, miners and prospectors who were gathered there.

Wild led the way as far to the front as they could get.

They took seats, and as the smoke was so thick, the only thing they could do to offset it was to smoke themselves.

This may sound a little queer to those who have not tried it, but it is the fact, nevertheless, that if a man enters a place where the tobacco smoke is so thick that it is objectionable, if he lights a pipe or cigar and begins to smoke himself, he will not notice it in the least.

When our three friends had been there a few minutes they could see more clearly through the smoke, too.

The orchestra struck up with renewed vigor and a Dutch comedian came out and amused the audience by doing a dance with a pair of wooden shoes.

Then he got off some very funny sayings and everybody laughed heartily.

Just as the comedian started to do some more dancing half a dozen men who were under the influence of drink entered.

They were a very reckless lot, and they crowded right up to the front, regardless of those they disturbed or upset.

When they got as far as they could go and found no vacant seats, they came back and paused directly in front of our three friends.

"Git up off that bench!" said one of the men, looking at Jim Dart.

"What for?" asked the boy, coolly.

"We want that bench. There's room enough on it for the four of us."

At this one of the employees of the place appeared and mildly protested.

Then one of the drunken roughs picked up the employee bodily and threw him upon the stage at the feet of the dancing comedian.

"Get off of that bench!" roared the fellow who had addressed Jim. "Git up, or we'll begin to spill lead! We paid our way in here, and we want a seat."

"Well, I'll give you a seat!" and with that Jim sprang at him and dealt him a blow with his fist that staggered him.

Then Young Wild West's right and left shot out in quick succession, and two of the rough's companions went up against his staggering form so suddenly that all three went in a heap to the floor.

"Whoopee!" yelled Cheyenne Charlie, and before the remaining fellow knew what had happened, the scout picked him up and slammed him down upon the three with a thud that knocked the breath from all of them.

"Whoopee!" he repeated. "I reckon us three kin take care of any amount of such fellows as you are."

A burst of applause went up from the audience, and seeing that he was no longer the attraction, the comedian ceased his antics.

As the men made efforts to get upon their feet Young Wild West called out sternly:

"Stay right where you are till I tell you to get up! I put two of you there, and I guess I've got the call. Take your hand away from that pistol, you lame coyote!"

The under fellow was making frantic efforts to get hold of his revolver, and he paid no attention to Wild's command, but succeeded in getting hold of and drawing it.

Crack!

As the sharp report of Young Wild West's revolver rang out the villain uttered a howl and let go of the weapon.

The bullet had merely grazed the back of his hand, but that was sufficient to make him give in.

"I'm shot!" he groaned. "Boys, don't make any fight; if you do, we're all goners!"

A yell of laughter went up from the crowd at this.

They could see everything that was going on, and the men enjoyed it immensely.

"When you all tell me that you will behave yourselves, I will let you get up," went on Wild, as though it was merely a farce he was taking part in. "Now, then, who is willing to say that he will behave himself first?"

"Me!" cried the fellow Jim had hit.

"Me, too," came from the other three, all speaking at once.

"Good! You can all get up."

Four more crestfallen mortals were never seen than they were when they arose to their feet.

The handling they had received had sobered them up somewhat, and sheepishly they started to go out of the hall.

"Hold on!" interposed Wild. "There are some seats back there. Sit down."

"We want to go out," answered one.

"Sit down, I say."

They sat down, and then the audience laughed again.

The manager of the show now came walking up the aisle.

"I should like to shake hands with you gentlemen," he said. "You are just the men I would like to have around here to keep order. The way you took those fellows down was great. Why, if you hadn't been here there would have been a general row in no time and my benches and things would have been broken up and the stage curtain riddled with bullets. And then there would have been a lot of blood to wipe up."

"Well, if that is the case, I am glad we were here," Wild replied. "But I don't think those fellows would harm anybody. They are about as innocent a lot as I've seen in a long time."

"You don't know them, young man. They could have started a general uproar in no time, and then the business would have been done. I would like to have your name, if you will give it to me."

"Young Wild West."

"And your two friends?"

"Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart."

Wild nodded to them as he spoke, so the man could distinguish one from the other.

"Thank you. If either of you ever want a favor, come to me. I am Bill Evans, and I own this show and the building it is in. I hope you enjoy the rest of the performance, gentlemen."

He walked away with a bow, and then the orchestra struck up, and a young woman took the place of the comedian and sang a song in a cracked voice.

But the song was a sentimental one, and it pleased the audience, so when it was over the incident of the taming of the four roughs was almost forgotten.

But Young Wild West and his partners were keeping a watch on the quartet.

They knew the men would want to be revenged, and there was no telling at what moment they might take it into their heads to open fire on them.

But they remained very quiet until the show was over.

Then, when they saw Wild and his companions get up to go out they got up also and went out ahead of them.

The men had their horses hitched outside, and as soon as they got to them and untied them they mounted and rode off, without so much as looking at our friends.

Young Wild West and his partners were looked at admiringly by nearly every one who had been to the show when they started for the hotel.

But the four men who had left without a word were not through with them yet.

It so happened that they belonged to the very organization Ripping Rube had become a member of that day.

But as they had never seen Young Wild West, they did not know him when they started the row in the hall.

But they knew him now.

CHAPTER V.

RIPPING RUBE IN DISGUISE.

"Get to cover—quick!" Ripping Rube had shouted when he saw Young Wild West walking along in the company of his partners and the boss of the mine.

"This way, then!" answered Captain Morley. "Here is a snug hiding-place."

He darted across a small open space, and pulling a flat piece of rock aside, disclosed the entrance to a narrow fissure.

Rube followed him quickly, but he looked over his shoulder and saw that Young Wild West was looking right at him.

He noticed how surprised the boy was when he saw him, but that was all. He wanted to get out of his sight as quickly as possible.

Into the fissure he dashed and then Morley stepped in after him, pulling the piece of rock over the opening as he did so.

"Go right on through," whispered the captain. "They may take it in their heads to follow and pull the rock aside. If they do they can't catch us, for this fissure runs into a good sized cave back here, which has an outlet the other side of the ridge. I found this place since we took the cave at the back of the cow-shed over at the Irish twins' place."

"Maybe it is a better place for us to hang out than the other one, then."

"Yes, when we get ready for business it will be. But just now we will hold our meetings where you were initiated to-day. We can get there without being seen by everybody, you know."

"Yes, I s'pose that's so."

The two villains had now entered the cave Morley spoke about.

It certainly was as big as the one they used for a meeting-place, and would be just what they wanted if they hoped to operate in a body near the mine.

The two paused and sat down on a boulder to wait for signs of pursuit through the fissure.

When ten minutes had expired they were satisfied that their hiding-place had not been discovered.

Both were now in a jubilant frame of mind.

"I brought you over here," said Morley, "to show you where they are going to build the log building to stow the gold they get out of the mine. Castine figures that inside of a week they will have a hundred tons of ore there all crushed and ready to transport to the smelting works a hundred miles south of here. My idea is to get a whack at two or three tons of the stuff that will pay about ten thousand to the ton. I am satisfied that there will be lots of that kind hauled out of the mine."

"I wouldn't wonder a bit," retorted Rube, who had a knowledge of mining in that section. "It may be that they strike a vein of pure gold. There's no end of copper here in these parts, and where there is copper there's always gold."

"They are after both gold and copper, and they expect to find silver, too, though it is the yellow stuff they want."

"And that's what we want."

"You have got that right, Rube. It's the gold that we are after. They can have the copper and silver, and welcome. We will let them dig the gold out for us."

Then the two villains laughed.

It was a great joke, they thought.

"By being at work there I can keep a pretty good line on what is taken out," went on Morley. "I will also find out just where the best stuff is placed, for they will surely keep the virgin stuff by itself."

"Yes, if they are lucky enough to find any."

"Oh, it is there all right. Castine and his partners are not fools enough to invest a whole lot of money in machinery without knowing pretty well how they are going to come out. They are not men of that kind. They are very close-fisted, and will make everything count in this deal."

"An' after we have raided 'em they kin start in over ag'in," chuckled Rube.

"Yes, they will have that opportunity."

"When did you say you thought we would be able to make the raid?"

"I don't know yet, but I imagine it won't be more than two or three weeks from now."

"Hardly as soon as that, I reckon, unless they happen to strike it rich."

"Well, let us hope that they do strike it rich. It is for our interest, you know."

They talked and laughed over the expected raid for a while longer and then Morley led the way to the exit through the cave.

It was as narrow a place as the one they had entered and was concealed pretty well by a rank growth of brambles.

The two men picked their way through the latter, receiving scratches as they went.

But they did not seem to care.

In a few minutes they reached the shanty of the Irish twins, as Morley chose to call it.

Then after looking all around to make sure that no one was watching, they went into the little bar, and thence into the cave.

Only half a dozen men were there, the rest having gone to Silver Slope, so it was reported.

A few boxes and blankets had been brought to the place, and as Ripping Rube was the only real fugitive, he felt that he had a good place to stay.

Pat and Mike, the twins, though they were known to be of a thieving disposition, did not have the officers of the law after them in that section, anyway.

The rest of the men were simply those who were either working at the new mine, or expected to work there.

Sanctuary Captain Morley, as he desired to be called by the men, took a strong notion to Ripping Rube.

Probably he saw in him the making of a tool to be used when none of the other men were available.

"Rube," said he, after they had all disposed of a drink

from a big black bottle, "what do you say if you and I go to town to-night?"

The villainous miner looked surprised.

"You don't mean that, do you, cap?" he questioned.

"Yes, I mean it. You were disguised last night, you said."

"Yes, I had on a wig of long black hair that I got once when I was down in Denver. You see, I used to wear my hair long once, an' that's what made me buy it. But it wouldn't do for me to wear ther wig where Young Wild West would be apt to see me. He knows that ther feller that killed old Bill Sandy had long hair an' was about my size. Ther widder told him that, an' he knows putty well that I'm ther man."

"Pshaw! Young Wild West never saw you with long hair, did he?"

"No."

"Well, get out the wig, and let me see what it looks like."

The miner quickly produced the article in question.

"That is all right," said the captain, as he unrolled it and smoothed out the hair. "It might be made out of horse-hair, but what's ther difference? Now, you just wait a few minutes, and I guarantee that you won't know yourself when you look in a mirror."

"What are you goin' to do?"

"Just wait a while. You don't mind having some of your beard taken off, do you?"

"No, I wouldn't care if it was all off."

"Well, just pile up some boxes over here in the light and put yourself in a comfortable position. I am going to do a little barbering on you."

"Good enough. Have you got a razor?"

"Oh, yes. I always carry one; I do my own shaving."

"Well, go ahead, then."

"I will have to send to the shanty and get a piece of soap first. One of you fellows run in and get it, won't you?"

A man who was well acquainted with the Irish family went out and returned in a few minutes with the soap.

Meanwhile Captain Morley had been working at the miner's beard with a sharp jackknife.

"I am goin' to fix you up to look like Buffalo Bill," said Morley with a laugh.

"I reckon I won't look like him, 'cause I've got a big red scar along my jawbone. That is one reason I let ther whiskers grow. They hid it, you know."

"I should say they did. Well, here goes!" and he began to apply some lather he had mixed up to the face of Rube.

When he got it rubbed in well he produced a razor and strop and went to work at a very tough job.

But he seemed to be an adept at the business, and when one of the men questioned him he admitted that he had been a barber in his younger days.

He spent over half an hour on Rube's face, and in that time he certainly wrought a big change in his appearance.

The villain now wore a flowing mustache and an imperial; his shaggy, reddish eyebrows had been darkened by a cosmetic, and the livid scar on his jawbone showed up so glaringly that his whole appearance was changed.

"Now for the wig," nodding with satisfaction as he surveyed the result of his work. "There! Now look at yourself. I'll bet your own mother wouldn't know you."

"She wouldn't for a fact," Rube admitted, as he looked at his reflection in the pocket mirror handed to him. "Gee! I'd hardly know myself! Don't that scar show, though?"

"That is the best part of it all, if no one around here knows you have it."

"There ain't any one what knows it this side of Arizona. I lived down there when I got it, an' my beard has been growin' ever since."

"Well, after you change a piece or two of clothes with the men, I guess you'll do to go to Silver Slope with me."

"I reckon I will, cap," answered Ripping Rube, who was delighted at the wonderful change that had been wrought in him.

"Well," observed Morley, looking at his watch, "it is getting towards night now. What do you say if we go now? All the rest of us have the use of the town, and you might as well, too."

"Jest as you say, cap."

"All right, then. Just make a few changes in your clothes and take one of the horses over there. By the way, you had better have your horse brought in here, too. He might come in handy some time."

"It won't do for any one to use him around here. He's a buckskin, you know, an' Young Wild West an' his pards would know ther critter ther minute they set eyes on him."

"We'll have to put a coat of paint on him," laughed one of the renegades.

Both Mike and Pat were in the lean-to, so the captain suggested that they go in there first.

He wanted to see if the cute Irishmen would recognize Rube.

They led the horses they were to ride out through the barn and walked over to the door of the shanty.

Before they could knock one of the brothers came out.

"Hello, Mr. Morley," he said, looking at the captain's companion in surprise.

"How are you?" retorted Morley, for the two looked so much alike he could not tell which was which.

"I am putty well, sir."

"So am I. Here is a friend who wants to join our organization. What do you think of him?"

"I'm after thinkin' that he would be a good one for us, sir," answered the Irishman, after he had inspected Rube from head to foot with a critical eye. "He do look loike a rogue, sir."

Both the villains laughed at this, but the Irishman did not tumble.

"Look at my friend carefully, and see if you do not recognize him. He says he saw you last night over in Dustville."

"Mebbe he did, but I didn't see him."

"Yes, you did, Mike," said the miner in his natural voice. "You seen me stick a knife in old Bill Sandy."

"Mother of Moses!" ejaculated Mike. "Yez don't mane to say that it is yesilf, Rube?"

"That's just who it is."

"Well, how come you to be after changin' so?"

"Ther captain fixed me up so I kin go around ther diggin's like ther rest of you. I'm going to Silver Slope with him now."

"Go right on. Yez will be perfectly safe, for yez own woife wouldn't know yez, if yez had one."

"I guess you will do," said Morley, as he mounted his horse. "If Young Wild West finds out who you are I'll be shot for a renegade, that's all!"

"I'll give him a chance to look at me, anyway," replied Rube, who was now getting reckless.

CHAPTER VI.

A TRYING ORDEAL.

It was past six o'clock when Young Wild West and his two partners got back to the Silver Star Hotel.

But as they had engaged accommodations, their supper was awaiting them, and without going to the bar-room, they took a wash and went into the dining-room.

It was not required that anything should occur to whet the appetites of the three.

They were as healthy as human beings could wish to be, and that meant that they were always ready to eat when meal times came around.

After a good hearty supper they felt better, and when a little idle talk had been indulged in at the table they got up, and putting on their hats, walked out into the bar-room, which, with the back room that adjoined it, was the place where the patrons of the hotel usually assembled.

There were six or seven men in the bar-room, and as some of them had been to the show that afternoon, they greeted Wild and his companions warmly when they came in.

"You fellows are the best I ever met," said one. "The way you handled those four men to-day was good to look at. I like to see nerve and power combined, and I saw it this afternoon in full force."

"Don't flatter us," answered Wild. "We have received so much flattery in our day that we have learned to dislike it. Every one likes a little flattery at times, but too much of it is apt to make a person get tired of it. Just because we made those four drunken fellows behave themselves at the show does not say that we are anything more than ordinary. They picked the muss, and we did what we should have done—we quieted them. We are strangers in this town, and we are here to mind our own business. If we are left alone I will guarantee that we will not interfere with any one in their line of duty. We are going to help put in the machinery at the new mine up on the ridge, and when the job is done we hope to go back home with good feelings toward all the citizens of Silver Slope."

This short speech of Wild's was received with great enthusiasm by those who had been at the show.

One man proposed three cheers for Young Wild West, and they were given with a will.

Before the cheering had died out two men suddenly stepped out of the back room and pushed their way to the bar.

They were Ripping Rube and Morley.

The villains had been in the place some time, and they had been playing cards in the back room to pass the time away.

When they heard Young Wild West talking outside they concluded to go out in the bar-room and take a look at him.

Morley had never seen him, and he was anxious to see what he looked like.

And Rube wanted to test his disguise, which was a natural one, for the most part.

The two had no sooner got out when the door opened and in came Castine and a couple of the men interested in the mine.

Our three friends had not met the rest of the company yet, so Castine immediately introduced the two who were with him.

Wild quickly sized them up as being a couple of good business men, who had a very small knowledge of mining.

While they were talking Castine happened to look around and spy Lon Morley, the engineer, who was to run the engine when it was set up.

"Ah, Morley," he exclaimed. "Come here and let me introduce you to Young Wild West. Mr. West, this is our engineer."

The two shook hands.

Then Charlie and Jim were also introduced, and after this Morley remarked that he would introduce a particular friend of his.

It was a daring thing for him to do, but he called Ripping Rube over and introduced him as Mr. Johnson.

And though our hero shook hands with the villain, he did not for a moment think he was the murderer of Bill Sandy.

Wild glanced at him, and, as Morley had said, the scar took his eye more than any other part of the man's countenance.

But, at the same time, he felt that he had seen him somewhere before.

Both Morley and Rube had been drinking just enough to make them reckless, and they chatted with our friends and the others in an easy-going manner.

Morley even went so far as to strike Castine for a job for his friend, telling him that he had been a fireman, and could answer the purpose now.

And the result was that he got the job with a promise of good wages.

The renegades were certainly working things nicely to make the raid a success when they got ready to make it.

The party talked together over an hour, and then it broke up.

The next morning Young Wild West, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart went out to the mine to superintend the work of putting in the machinery.

Of course there were men there to set it up, but they instructed them where to place it by measuring the distance between certain pieces of it, so as to make it so there would be room to work.

That was one of the things they were there for.

But the main thing was to set the machinery going when the proper time came and instruct the men how to separate the various kinds of ore that came up.

There was a big gang of men, and the work started right in.

Rube worked along with the captain of the renegade gang and did not offer to bother with Young Wild West.

But he meant to settle accounts with him before he got through.

At the end of a week some of the machinery was put in motion, and the work of mining the gold, silver and copper began in earnest at the new mine.

The pounding of the machinery went on incessantly, and blasts could be heard at irregular intervals during the days that followed.

A gang of men built a strong building of logs in a cut near the mine under the supervision of Castine, who had an idea of how it should be constructed.

It was a double affair, there really being one building inside another.

The inside one was of logs, fastened with iron bolts, which were riveted so it would be an impossibility to tear the joints apart without using great force.

The outside was also of logs set together in the regular way log cabins are built.

There was but one door to it, and this was a massive affair of oak and iron, and the bars and lock were such as could not be opened without the use of dynamite.

The floor was three sets of logs bolted to one another, so if

thieves should dig under in the hope of getting it they would but labor for naught.

"There!" exclaimed Castine, when the building was completed. "I guess that will hold our gold safe enough till we get ready to ship it off by mule trains to be smelted. I'd like to see the gang that would steal it from there."

"Thieves sometimes have a way of breaking the strongest bars and locks," retorted Young Wild West. "You must not depend upon the strength of the building alone; it should be guarded night and day."

"That's right," spoke up Morley, the engineer, who stood by. "If it was me, I'd have a man with a Winchester rifle over his shoulder guarding the place all the time."

"I think I will act on that suggestion," Castine answered, and then the engineer walked away with a peculiar grin on his face that Wild did not fail to notice.

That evening, when our three friends were eating their supper alone at the table in the Silver Star Hotel, Wild brought up the subject of the treasure house, as it was called.

"Castine is taking all sorts of precautions," said he. "But I think he even ought to go further in that line than he has done."

"Why?" asked Jim.

"Well, I have an idea that there is a movement on foot among the employees of the mine to get hold of the treasure after enough of it has accumulated to make it an object. I don't mean all the men employed there, of course, but a few of them. There is Morley, the engineer. I don't like that man, and the fellow Johnson, who fires for him, I wouldn't trust as far as I could see him."

"I wouldn't, either," remarked Cheyenne Charlie. "He has ther very looks of a rogue in him. Sometimes I think I have seen ther man somewhere, but I can't call it to mind when an' where it was, to save me."

"It's the same way with me," Wild said. "I have seen lots of men with scars on their faces, but I can't place him as being any of them, and yet that scar has no doubt been on his cheek for years."

It was during the third week of their stay on the Big Divide that something occurred to make things exciting for our hero, for a time, anyhow.

One night, just before dark, as he was walking down from the mine, where he had been superintending the change of a piece of machinery, two masked men jumped from behind a boulder and seized him before he could get his hand upon his revolver.

Wild was alone at the time, and though he uttered a cry, there was no one close enough to hear him.

The men were powerful fellows, and they succeeded in rendering him powerless in short order.

The attack upon him had taken place right at the spot where he gave Castine his first lesson in the art of shooting, and the boulder the two men sprang from behind was the identical one they had used for a target on that day.

Before he fairly realized what they were going to do with him he was whisked into a dark place and carried along for several feet into a cave.

The renegades had captured him!

Though Morley had been averse to doing it, Ripping Rube had prevailed upon him till he gave his consent.

But the understanding was that Young Wild West was not to be killed; he was simply to be put through a course of sprouts and then left on some wild spot on the mountain several miles from home, with the warning for him never to bother with any man's business but his own hereafter.

Rube agreed to this, but he meant to kill the dashing young prince of the saddle after everything else was done.

He was really the only man among the renegades who had a desire to take the blood of a human being.

Of course any one of them would be ready to fight to the death if he got cornered.

Wild was taken into the cave that was near to the mine.

The renegades had taken up their quarters there a couple of days before.

Captain Morley was an ingenious sort of a fellow, and he had heard so much about Young Wild West that he determined to give him the scare of his life.

It was he and Rube who had so neatly captured the boy.

There was not a particle of light in the cave, and before the villain allowed a lantern to be lighted he saw to it that Wild was securely bound and blindfolded.

When this was done he lighted a lantern himself, and then went around and talked to the renegades present in whispers.

The result was that half an hour later a mule wagon

drove up to the mouth of the cave and our hero was carried out and placed in it.

"Drive around ther mountain anywhere, an' come back after an hour has passed," Morley whispered to one of the twins, who was acting in the capacity of driver.

The fellow nodded, and then the heavy wagon rattled off. Of course this move fooled our hero.

He certainly thought he was being taken away to some place distant from the spot he had been captured upon.

But, as usual, he kept very cool.

The ropes he was bound with were so tight that they fairly cut into his flesh.

And he could scarcely move any part of his body.

Morley had taken the precaution to gag as well as blindfold him, and that made him all the more uncomfortable.

Though it seemed to be much longer than an hour to the helpless boy, it was not when the mule wagon came to a halt near the mouth of the cave again.

He was lifted out, not one of the renegades saying a word, and taken into the cave.

Then the team was driven into a clump of bushes, so as to hide it from the view of any one who might be passing.

Morley had made great preparations to put Young Wild West through a course of sprouts.

In addition to the swinging ax trick, he had procured a young goat from one of the Irish twins, and just as Wild was placed upon his back on the floor of the cave the animal was shot.

"Ha! you fool, you have have shot one of your own brothers, instead of the prisoner!" cried Morley, in a fair stage voice. "You shall die for that, and the prisoner shall be the one to kill you!"

Then for the next five minutes there was a lot of confusion in the place, during which time the carcass of the dead goat was rigged up in the clothing of a man.

This was then laid behind a couple of boxes, so all that could be seen was what looked like the body of a man from the neck down to the loins.

When all was in readiness the rays of a bull's-eye lantern was turned upon the body, and Wild was lifted to his feet.

"Cut the prisoner's bonds and remove the gag and blindfold!" commanded Morley, disguising his voice so well that our hero could not recognize it.

He was obeyed instantly, and then, as our hero opened his eyes he saw a circle of masked men standing around him, each one of whom had a cocked revolver leveled at him.

"Young Wild West," said Morley, "you have fallen into the hands of men who hate you worse than poison. There are some standing before you that have been forced to leave towns and quit business on your account. It may seem strange that so many men who knew you in other places should be gathered here to-night to get their revenge upon you, but such is the case. It has been voted that you die, but I, the leader of this powerful band of men, have decided to give you your life and freedom, if you successfully go through the ordeal before you. If you do this you will be carried to some lonely portion of the Divide and allowed to go. Have you anything to say before we begin?"

"I don't know as there will be much use in me saying anything," the boy retorted, with surprising coolness. "You caught me napping, and I suppose I have got to suffer for it. It is not the first time that I have been in the hands of a gang like this, though, and I have always come out all right. I might say that I am not aware of having done anything against any one here, but I will not say that I have not, for I have always made it a point, since I was big enough to know anything, to fight for the right; to help those deserving of it; to teach men to be honest and upright, and to break up such bands of sneaking outlaws as this of yours seems to be! Now you can proceed."

The masked men looked at one another when the boy calmly uttered the words.

They had not expected to hear anything like this from his lips.

"Well," observed the captain of the masked band, after a pause, "if that is all you have to say we will proceed. Now, then, Young Wild West, I command you to take this knife and plunge it into the heart of the man whose carelessness caused him to slay one of his brothers! There lies your victim; proceed!"

"I refuse to do it," came from the lips of the brave young Prince of the Saddle.

"Think again."

"I have thought."

"Well, I will give you one more chance. Plunge that knife in the breast of the man lying on the floor before you! Do it, or you will die a horrible death inside of ten minutes!"

"Fiend that you are!" retorted Young Wild West, his eyes flashing. "I have never yet taken a human life unless there was just cause for it. I will not do it now. If you will pick a man from your crowd of masked scoundrels who is not afraid to die, I will face him and fight with that knife you hold in your hand, he to have a similar weapon. If you want to test my courage, that is a good way to do it."

"You are brave enough in your speech, anyhow," answered Morley, shrugging his shoulders. "If I consent to do as you say, I suppose you would expect your freedom, in case you won."

"I would not fight under any other conditions."

"Ah, then you would try your best to kill one of my good men, when here lies one who is not fit to live whom you refuse to kill."

"He is helpless."

Wild surely thought it was a man lying there, so well had the villains carried out the deception.

"Then you refuse to take the knife and plunge it in his body?"

"Yes; I refuse!"

"Then I will do it for you!"

As he said this Morley stepped over to the dummy, and dropping upon one knee, raised the knife and plunged it into the body of the slain goat.

A man hiding behind a rock uttered a gasping, gurgling cry, and then a stream of blood spurted up from the carcass.

This was sickening to Wild, but he did not lose his nerve. "Of all the fiends I ever saw, you are the worst!" he exclaimed.

"You must not think that," was the reply. "Just wait a moment till I show you how I am going to put you out of the world. Place him beneath the ax, men!"

In a twinkling half a dozen men had him in their grasp, and though he struggled to get away from them, they quickly flung him upon his back and held him down.

Morley had caused the heavy axe to be suspended in the same fashion that it had been in the other cave when Ripping Rube was initiated, and as a lantern was held above him, Wild saw it.

The keen edge was aimed directly for his throat, and as he looked at it he came to the conclusion that his last moments on earth had arrived.

The captain seized the rope and lowered it a few inches toward the prostrate boy.

"Now, then, Young Wild West, will you do what I tell you to?" he asked.

"It depends upon what it is," came the calm reply.

"Take hold of this rope."

The renegades released his arms, and Wild did so.

"That is it. Now I guess you are coming around. The rope you have in your hand holds the axe from dropping upon you. Now let me take it again."

He took hold of it.

"Take this knife," and he handed the one he had plunged into the carcass of the goat to the prostrate boy.

Young Wild West took it, for at that very instant he had resolved upon a desperate plan of action.

"I have heard that you have more nerve than most men," went on Morley. "Have you enough nerve to cut the rope and let the axe drop upon your neck? It will end your life and save you from the tortures that are to come, if you do."

"I have the nerve."

The reply came in a steady voice.

"Step back, men, and watch him commit suicide."

Those who were holding him upon the floor released him and stepped back.

"Cut the rope!" commanded the captain in a voice of thunder.

Slash!

With one quick blow, Young Wild West severed the rope, rolling over as he did so.

He did not notice that it was but a trick, but immediately caught Morley about the legs and threw him to the ground.

Then, before the astonished renegades realized what had happened, he was upon their leader and had the knife poised to strike him to the heart.

"Now, then, you fiend!" cried Wild, "if your men shoot me I will plunge this knife in you as I die!"

"Don't shoot, men!" said Morley, hoarsely.

The villain had found his match, and it was he who was now being tortured.

Never had he felt such a grip upon his throat before.

"Am I to go free?" asked Wild, with just a tinge of triumph in his voice.

"Yes."

"Get up, then, my brave captain, and see that you keep your word."

He allowed the villain to get up, stepping back from the circle of men, who stood as if petrified at the sudden turn of affairs.

Morley had been defeated in his attempt to put the boy through a course of sprouts, but he had no idea of killing him.

In fact, he had more respect for him than before.

Young Wild West's undaunted manner and coolness had touched a tender spot in the villain's heart.

He admired him, because he had never seen a man act the way he did.

The risk he ran in cutting the rope and dodging the axe at the same time was enough to show the iron nerve he had.

"You are to go free, Young Wild West," Morley said slowly and deliberately. "You are to go free, but you must be blindfolded and taken to some distant spot, so you will be unable to locate this cave."

"Very well."

"If you can look at what has happened to-night in the same light as you would if you had been initiated into a secret order, it might be better for you. There is no telling but we may meet again some time, when you will have the upper hand. I think I am entitled to a promise from you in return for letting you go, especially as it is against the wishes of some of my men."

"What promise do you want me to give?" asked Wild, just the least bit curious.

"It is this. If my life should be in danger at any time, and you should be near at the time, if I say to you, 'Don't break your promise!' you are to save me if you can. Will you give that promise?"

"Yes."

"Good! I, myself, will drive you to a spot where you will be set at liberty."

One hour later Young Wild West was alone in the darkness on the mountainside with the lights of the town far below him.

CHAPTER VII.

WILD DISCOVERS THE PLOT.

Wild looked around him when he found he was alone.

True to his agreement, Morley had driven out on the mountain with him, and when he arrived at a spot that he thought was a good place he removed the blindfold from the boy's eyes and bade him step out of the wagon.

Then he told him that he expected him not to follow the wagon, but to wend his way to the town below as soon as he had a mind to.

It was a peculiar sort of an ordeal Wild had passed through, and when he had summed it up he was at a loss to understand it all.

But here he was on the mountain, with Silver Slope four or five miles from him, and the only thing he could do now was to walk to the hotel.

The weapons that had been taken from him had been returned to him by the masked captain of the renegades, and that was one consolation to him.

After taking his bearings he set out for the town.

Being a perfect stranger in those parts, he was compelled to pick his way carefully.

But for the most part, it was down-hill, and at the end of half an hour he suddenly came in sight of the mine that was turning out so much gold to Castine and his friends.

All was silent there, so he kept on till he saw the treasure house that was built so strongly.

Already there were many thousand dollars' worth of gold in the place, and as Wild neared it he listened for a sound of the watchman.

But instead of hearing the steady tramp of a man on guard the noise of digging came to his ears.

What could this mean?

He knew positively that there was to be no work done that night.

And if there was it would not be near the treasure house.

"I guess something is up," our hero muttered, and then he started softly in the direction of the sounds.

In less than a minute he saw the guard walking softly about in the company of another man, while the sounds made by pick and shovel went right on.

The two men were talking in low tones, and just as he was about to ask them what was going on, Wild caught a couple of words they were saying.

"It will be dangerous!"

Those were the words he heard.

"Ah!" he thought, and then he nodded and crouched behind a small clump of bushes.

The two men were walking right toward him as they talked, and as he listened he heard the other say:

"Yes, it will be dangerous, but look what we will make by it. We'll take our pick of what's there, an' then be off with it to ther cave. We won't be suspected of doin' it, an' when it blows over we kin cart it away by degrees."

"Yes, but can we get at the gold before any one gets here?"

"I don't see why we can't. There will be fifteen of us, countin' ther two that j'ined us last night. It will take half an hour before any one kin git here from ther town after ther explosion takes place."

"That's so, I suppose."

"Of course, it will take that long. I reckon fifteen men kin load three wagons in that time, can't they?"

"Yes, but they want to load them in less than that time."

"Well, they kin do it in twenty minutes an' be away long before any one gits here from ther town."

The two men had now turned and were walking back.

Their words soon became indistinct, but Wild remained right where he was, feeling sure that he would learn more if he did so.

And he was right, for a minute later they came back toward him, and he could hear what they were saying as they came.

"It looks as though it will be mighty easy," the guide was remarking. "When does the captain expect to blow up the building?"

"Saturday night at sunset," answered the other man.

"And to-day is Wednesday."

"Yes, three more days off, an' in that time there will be a lot of them rich nuggets they started to dig out to-day. It will be ther biggest haul ever made on ther Big Divide, you kin bet your boots! Lon Morley has got a head on him that is worth a dozen ordinary men."

"Yes, he is as smart as a steel trap, I'll admit. But I don't like the fellow they call Ripping Rube."

Our hero grew more interested than ever when he heard this.

"Well, I don't, either, but Morley says he is jest ther man to have around in case there is anything to be done that is foul and sneakin'. Rube is jest ther sort of a man for that, you know."

"What are you goin' to use—the common blasting powder, or nitro?"

"Nitro-glycerine. They are goin' to plant it to-night and leave ther end of the copper wire to attach ther wire from ther battery to jest covered up. We will all lay up among ther boulders, an' when ther time comes Morley will press ther button an' up goes ther northwest corner of the log house what Castine thinks is invincible."

"And then we will rake out ther stuff!"

"That's it. Morley says it will be as much of a joke on Castine an' ther rest as it will be anything else."

"An' it will sort of surprise Young Wild West, too, won't it? He acted as a sort of superintendent when they were building the treasure house."

"Yes, though Morley says he suggested that a strong guard be kept on ther place. Won't ther logs go flyin' in ther air, though?"

At this juncture the two villains walked away again, and keeping close to the ground, Wild crept over toward the building where the digging was going on.

In the starlight he could see a number of the men who were working at the mine digging away beneath the corner of the building.

The way they worked showed that they were in dreadful earnest, and in a hurry, as well.

He had not been over there five minutes when he saw a man whom he recognized as Lon Morley, the engineer, carry a large tin can from the place the explosives were stored near by and place it in the hole the men had finished digging

near by.

Then he brought another and placed it beside the first.

"Whoa!" thought Young Wild West. "There is enough nitro-glycerine there to blow the gold that is in the building

over the mountain. Ah! Now he is fixing the copper wire. Well, it is a good thing they are not going to do the blowing up to-night, for they might succeed in getting away with some of the stuff. But they would not all get away, though," and he looked at the revolver he held in his hand significantly.

Wild remained there till the men got through with their nefarious work and took their departure.

When they had all gone he stole softly away till he got out of sight and hearing of the treacherous guard and made his way rapidly to the hotel.

When he got there he found that both Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were out.

The proprietor and Castine sat playing cribbage, as usual, and when he came in they both greeted him.

"I knew you would come back pretty soon," Castine said. "I told those chums of yours not to be alarmed. They have been hunting for you since eight o'clock."

"An' it's a quarter to twelve now," remarked the hotel keeper with a yawn. "Well, we will play one more game and then quit for the night."

"All right."

Wild turned away to go out and see if he could learn anything as to the whereabouts of Charlie and Jim.

He smiled when he thought of how easy Castine was taking things.

"If he knew as much as I do he would be fairly dancing with alarm," thought the boy. "Well, it won't do to tell him too quickly, as he might spoil what I have in my mind. Those fellows have got to be caught in a trap. I have certainly experienced a great night, but I guess it has been all for the best, after all."

Young Wild West had not walked down the street very far when he met Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart riding toward the hotel.

"Hello, boys!" he called out.

"Hello!" they answered joyously.

"Were you looking for me?"

"Yes, we've been hunting high and low for you," answered Jim.

"And you looked everywhere but the right place."

"Where were you?" queried the scout, as he dismounted and grabbed his young friend by the hand.

"Well, I think I have put in the queerest of four or five hours of my life to-night. I will tell you all about it when I get to the hotel."

"Somethin' happened to you, then?"

"Yes, something out of the ordinary, too."

Both were anxious to hear all about it, but they did not press him further there.

They knew Young Wild West so well that they never asked him to tell anything until they knew he was ready to tell it. When Charlie and Jim had put up their horses all three repaired to the big front room they occupied together upstairs in the hotel, and then Wild sat down and related his experience.

He told them exactly what had happened, except one thing.

That was the promise the masked leader of the renegades had exacted from him.

For some queer reason, Wild did not feel like telling them about that just then.

He might later on, but just now he felt as though he would wait a while and see if he did meet the captain again under the circumstances that were reverse to those of their first meeting.

"Ther masked renegades worked a sort of a degree on you, did they?" Charlie remarked with wide-open eyes, when Wild had finished.

"Yes, I suppose you could call it that."

"It must have made the cold chills run over you," said Jim.

"I will own up that it did not make me feel very pleasant."

"Ther man what invented that swingin' axe business must be a regular Satan," ventured the scout, shrugging his shoulders. "Well, it was certainly a great experience, but, as you say, it was a lucky one, for all that, for after you got out you found out a plot that means a whole lot. Won't Castine be glad when you tell him about it?"

"He ought to be," declared Jim. "I was of the opinion all along that the gold they were storing in that house would be a temptation to some one. I knew one man could not get at it, but a number of them can, you see, for they would surely have succeeded in getting away with the dust and nuggets if Wild had not accidentally found out what was in the wind."

"Well, boys, just don't mention a word of this to any of

the men who own the mine. I will have a talk with Castine some time to-morrow and we will settle on a way to catch the villains red-handed."

"We won't say anything, not till you tell us to," declared Charlie.

"Of course not," added Jim.

"I knew you wouldn't, but I could not help saying that just then. You see, I am a little puzzled as to how we will proceed to catch the raiders in a trap. I'll think of a way before I go to sleep, though."

They turned in a little late that night, but the next morning the three were up as early as usual.

Wild had thought of a way to trap the raiders, but he thought he would have a talk with Castine first.

It was not until noon that he got a good chance to talk to the head of the mine owners, and when he got him all alone Wild said:

"Something is going to happen Saturday night at sunset, Mr. Castine."

"What is it?" asked the man in surprise.

"Fifteen renegades are going to raid the treasure house and carry away the dust and nuggets stored there."

"What!" and Castine acted as though he was going to have a fit.

"That is right. Listen, and I will tell you all about it," and he did so.

Castine turned all colors, but he soon cooled down.

"Advise me what to do in the matter," he said.

"I will, but I want my way about it."

"You can have it. I will leave it all to you."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRAP IS SET.

"I believe every word you have told me, Wild," said Castine. "And, as I said, I will leave it all to you."

"Well, then, I will tell you what my idea is. We will cut the wire the villains lay and then lay another wire which we will attach to a small can of nitro-glycerine and bury it far enough from the building so as to not damage it. Then you and I will take a battery and lie low till exactly sunset, as I understand that that is the time they intend to blow up the treasure house. We will connect the cut wire with another where some powder has been sprinkled, and when we see the flash we will press our button. When the report sounds the raiders will rush down upon the building, thinking they have blown it apart."

"I see!" exclaimed Castine excitedly. "What then?"

"We will have enough men hiding around to rush upon them and capture them in short order."

"Good! That is an excellent plan. You will arrange it so when the villains press the button the powder will flash as a signal for us. Then one of us will press a button that will explode the small can. When they hear the report they will run to the building, and then we have got them."

"That's it."

"Well, you go ahead and fix this wire business, will you?"

"Yes, I will watch them to-night, and if they lay the wire I will cut it as soon as they go away and lead one over in the hollow over there."

"Well, you can find all the wire you want in the shop. I will bring the battery around Saturday noon, so we will have it ready."

This being understood, things went along the same as usual that day.

But as soon as it was dark that night Young Wild West set out for the vicinity of the treasure house.

He got there just in time to hear the treacherous guard conversing with one of the raiders.

As he caught his voice he recognized the fellow as Morley.

"I wouldn't trust anybody else to do this," he heard him say. "It is fine work, this explosion business. I will lay the wire right to the cave, and Saturday night when we quit work I will smuggle a battery out of the shop with me. There is always one around handy over there."

"Oh, yes," replied the guard. "You'll have no trouble about that part of it. But don't put that battery to it till the last minute. I want to be with you when you press the button, you know."

"All right. You need not fear of there being a premature explosion. I know just what I am doing."

Then while they talked Morley began laying a wire toward the rocks above, using a convenient strip of bushes for the purpose of hiding it.

Close to the building he covered the wire with the new dirt that had been turned up when the place was built.

It was not such a long job, and in an hour he had completed it and disappeared to Wild knew not where, for he was gone all at once, and though he waited half an hour for him to appear, he did not show up.

Wild now waited for the guard to sneak off and go to sleep, as he believed he was in the habit of doing.

He was right in his belief, too, for it was not more than ten minutes before the fellow began to yawn, and then muttering to himself, he went and sat down against the south side of the treasure house.

Then our hero stole softly with his coil of wire to the strip of bushes.

From there to the hollow where he intended to place the little can of explosive was only a few feet.

In ten minutes he had cut the wire and attached a roll of paper to the end of it.

The roll of paper contained about half a gun-load of fine powder.

"If it rains before the time, this will have to be done over," muttered the boy, as he crawled toward the hollow.

Fastening the end of his coil to a small sapling, he trailed it away to a convenient place and left the coil lying in the grass where it would not be apt to be seen, as it was out of line of any path.

Castine and Wild's two partners met him when he came back to the hotel, and when he told them what he had done they were much pleased.

"That fellow of a guard has got to be hung before my eyes for the part he is taking in the game," said Castine. "I can't hardly keep from clutching him by the throat when I see him."

"And your engineer—he's a fine chap, ain't he?" observed Charlie. "He's at the bottom of it all."

"He shall hang, too, and so shall every mother's son of them, if I can get a judge and jury who will do the right thing."

Wild advised him not to get excited over it, and not to say a word to anybody till the proper time came.

The next day was Friday and that noon the owners of the mine and our friends held a consultation as to the best way to proceed.

On the advice of Wild it was decided to get the men they needed to capture the villains with from outsiders.

It was hard to tell which of the employees were not connected with the renegade band.

Our hero had intended to make a search for the masked band's headquarters before this, just for the sake of locating it.

But the proposed raid on the treasure house gave him all he wanted to do just now.

The guard spoke to them pleasantly and they answered and were in some way connected with the men who were going to make the raid.

When it occurred to him that he had heard one of them talking to Ripping Rube he made up his mind that it was more than probable that he was a member of the masked band of renegades, and that he was keeping close in their headquarters.

Wild had no idea that the headquarters of the villains was so near the treasure house.

They had deceived him badly when they carted him around in the mule wagon for so long a time.

But he was going to be surprised considerably before the raid of the renegades was finished.

CHAPTER IX.

THE IRISH TWINS ARE TAUGHT A LESSON.

Friday night, shortly after dark, the man who was guarding the treasure house, or, rather, the man who was hired to guard it but was making a traitor of himself, while walking a little off his beat, caught his foot in something and tripped.

He at once thought of the wire Morley had laid, and he promptly struck a match to investigate.

Sure enough, he found the broken end of a wire on the ground, and he grew very nervous when he saw it.

"Pshaw!" he muttered. "I guess I kin fix it without waitin' for Morley to come along, an' he may not come around to-night, anyhow. I wonder where the other end is? I've only got to twist the two ends together, anyhow."

Then he began to search around through the bushes in the darkness for the other piece.

After awhile he found it, or rather thought he did, and twisted the two ends tightly together.

"There!" he exclaimed. "That is just as good as it was before, an' Morley won't know that it was ever broke."

The guard was unaware of the fact that while he was fooling so long with the wire he was making a sure connection to death.

But it was done now, and he would never be the wiser.

It was but a few minutes later when Ripping Rube and the Irish twins came along.

They were on horseback and were heading for the town to have a good time before the great raid was to take place.

Somehow he could not help thinking that the masked band passed on.

We will leave the guard and follow them.

"You fellers must be putty anxious to see Young Wild West, or you wouldn't have come down," Rube said. "How was it that you wasn't in ther cave ther night before last when we had him there?"

"Our mother was taken very sick that night," answered Pat. "We thought it best to stay in an' nurse her."

"That's roight," added Mike. "Mother's the best friend we'll ever be after havin', so we mane to trate her roight while she lives."

Rube shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know whether my mother is alive or dead," he said. "It's years since I've seen her."

"Well, bedad! our mother is a little gone in the head, but we love her, just the same," averred Pat. "There is only one thing we would never do for her, an' many a toime I have been after wishin' I had done it."

"What's that?"

"Lived an honest loife."

"Roight yez are, Pat!" exclaimed Mike. "I am after bein' of that same opinion."

Again Rube shrugged his shoulders.

"You fellers are gettin' sentimental, I reckon," he observed.

"Call it what yez loike," answered Pat. "But I'll give yez me word of honor that after this raid to-morrer noight I am goin' to give up bein' bad."

"So am I," chimed in his brother.

"Why don't you give it up before the raid is made?" queried Ripping Rube.

"Bedad! we would be after losin' too much."

All three laughed at this joke and proceeded on in silence till they reached the Silver Star hotel.

"Here's where Young Wild West and his pards are stoppin'," remarked Rube. "Now, be carefnl an' call me Mr. Johnson when you speak to me. That's ther name I go by here, you know."

They assured him that they would not forget, and then dismounting, they tied their horses and went inside.

There was quite a crowd in the bar and back room, and among the assortment of young men were Young Wild West, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart.

They were playing a game of dominoes with one of the members of the mining company, and as they sat there attending strictly to the game the Irish twins had a good opportunity to size them up.

They took their time in doing it, too, and a little later when they walked outside with Rube, he asked them what they thought of the young deadshot.

"He's nothin' but a boy," said Mike.

"An' a fool of a boy at that," chimed in Pat.

"Don't fool yourself on that," advised Rube, shaking his head after the fashion of one who knows.

"The stories about how he kin toss any man over his head that he tackles, that I have been after hearin' told by the men in the mines, are only dreams," Mike insisted.

"Bedad! I would like to see him toss me over his head," Pat declared.

"Well, I don't know nothin' more about what he kin do in that line than you do. But I reckon I don't want to tackle him face to face."

"Well, bedad! I'll tackle him before I go home to-night."

"So will I, bejabbers!"

The villainous miner said no more.

The truth of it was that he was just itching to see some one give Young Wild West a good thrashing—or kill him, for that matter.

The two brothers, who looked so much alike, now began to play themselves with whisky.

They wanted to get themselves in the proper humor.

Rube drank every time they did, and pretty soon he began to urge them to tackle the boy.

When they had been in the bar a little more than half an hour they decided to do so.

Mike led the way to the back room.

The game of dominoes had been broken up, and Wild was just rising from his chair.

"Excuse me, me friend," said Mike, stepping up to him. "So you are Young Wild West, are yez?"

"Yes; I guess that's who I am," was the reply.

"Well, we are after worrukin' over at the new mine, an' we've heard a lot about yez, but this is ther first toime we have had a good chance to see yez."

"You must be interested in me, then?" Wild asked, imagining that something was coming.

"Yes; we heard as how you could take up a man an' t'row him over yez head."

It was Pat who made this remark, and there was a twinkle in his eye as he spoke that told Wild plainly that he was up to mischief.

"Sometimes you hear things that are not true," our hero said, evasively.

"There!" exclaimed Mike. "I knew it couldn't be that ther boy knew anything about wrestlin'."

"Mebbe he thinks he does, though."

Then the two kept on talking in this strain till Wild got disgusted with them and turned to walk away.

"Hold on!" cried Mike, catching him by the shoulder. "I would loike to try yez at wrestlin', anyhow."

"Would you? Well, there you go, then!" and as quick as a flash the boy seized him by the arms and threw him over his hip so hard that he spun completely over and landed on his back upon the floor.

"Now, then," said Young Wild West, with flashing eyes, "you fellows came here for the purpose of having fun with me, I suppose. If you haven't changed your minds, I will accommodate you to your heart's content. You have heard that I was good at wrestling and you think you can give me a few points."

"Bedad! I guess yez are roight," said Pat, as he stared at his brother, who was just getting up from the floor.

At this juncture Roby, the proprietor of the hotel, hurried up to Wild and whispered something in his ear.

"That's all right," answered our hero. "I guess I can handle the pair of them if they both come at me at one time."

"But they have the reputation of being able to throw any two men who tackle them jointly," the hotel man declared, speaking aloud now.

Mike was now on his feet again, but he had not made a move to come any closer.

"If they think they are able to best any two men, I'll go in with Wild, and we'll show you how we will fool them," said Jim.

"No, no!" cried Young Wild West, whose blood was now up. "I will wrestle the pair of them. I will give them each a single fall, but that is to end it, as far as wrestling is concerned. They are as much alike as two peas, and I will try to throw them both alike. They have picked on me, and I'll see the thing through now."

This was altogether unexpected to the Irish twins.

Mike's back ached from the fall he had just experienced, and it had been executed so swiftly and with such ease, that Pat was just the least bit timid about going in the contest.

But Wild was not going to let them back out now.

He was just mad enough to be ready for anything, and he resolved to give Mike and Pat something to remember.

What he was going to do he meant to do quickly and then make an end of the bout.

If he defeated them and they were not satisfied, he would show them something that they would not like so well as wrestling, perhaps.

"Clear the room!" he called out, and the tables and chairs were immediately taken out of the center.

"Now then, you get over there," he added, pointing to Mike. "And you, other fellow, get over there."

He nodded to opposite sides of the room as he spoke, and pulling off their coats, the twins obeyed.

"Since I am going to wrestle the two of you at the same time, I am going to lay down the rules of the contest," the young Prince of the Saddle observed. "I will stand here in the centre of the room, and when I give the word, you can both run to me and grab me and throw me up against the ceiling, do you understand?"

They said they did.

"All right, then. When I count three, come. One, two, three!"

Mike and Pat sailed for him like a couple of bulldogs, and it seemed to the spectators that they would surely make short work of the boy.

But that was where they were mistaken.

Wild was going to show them how quick he was.

They were coming from opposite directions, and just as they were to grab him from both sides he dropped to the floor.

Bump!

The heads of the Irish twins came together with awful force: for an instant they stood upright, and then gasping they fell flat on their backs.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Young Wild West, "that winds up the wrestling bout."

A shout of applause went up from the lookers-on, and every one but Ripping Rube clapped his hands.

It was a great trick that Young Wild West had played on them, but it only served them right.

It is not a pleasant thing to strike one's head against a hard substance while walking forward, but for two rushing men to come squarely together, as they had—well, it was an awful shock.

It was more than a minute before either of them got up.

When they did get up and sit on chairs that were placed in position for them, they were so dazed that they did not know where they were.

Young Wild West walked calmly out into the barroom as though nothing had happened.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Jim Dart, with a laugh, "what made you think of playing such a trick as that, Wild?"

"I thought of it the moment I saw them. They are twins, and look so much alike that it struck me that they would act alike. That is why I put one on one side and the other on the opposite. Both were intent on getting the same hold upon me, and if they had got it I guess they would have treated me rather rough for a while."

"But they didn't get their hold," chuckled Cheyenne Charlie.

"No; and I did not intend that they should."

"I wonder if they will be satisfied now?"

"I don't know, but I rather think they will. The jar they both got ought to be sufficient to last them for two or three days."

A few minutes later the twins came out with Ripping Rube and tried some more whisky.

Wild thought they were going to try some other game on him, but he was mistaken, for they walked out, both rubbing their heads, as though sympathizing with each other.

Mike and Pat had certainly had enough.

They were still dazed, and it was necessary for Rube to help them mount their horses.

"I never saw such a thing done before in my life," observed the villainous miner, as they rode off in the direction of the home of his companions.

"He fooled us, bedad!" said Mike.

"An' he fooled us bad," added Pat.

"You both went down as though you was hit with a batterin'-ram."

"I belave I was after seein' ten thousand stars."

"There is a loight flashin' before my eyes yet, bedad!"

It had been the intention of the twins to go to the headquarters of the renegade band when they came back from the town, but they felt so sore from the effects of their wrestling bout that they insisted on going home.

"You had better go an' hear what's to be done to-morrer at sunset," Rube said. "Ther captain is goin' to give us all instructions to-night, you know."

"I can't help that, bejabers! Me head aches worse nor it was after doin' before," averred Mike.

"An' mine's the same way," added his brother.

So Rube rode as far as the lean-to with them, and then bade them good-night.

He then turned his horse in the direction of the cave.

In a few minutes he was there, and giving the signal, he was admitted.

The renegades were all present but the two Irishmen.

Rube told what had happened to them, and then there was not a man present who did not laugh.

The four men who had been so roughly handled in the concert hall were there, and they laughed louder than any of the rest.

They knew something about Young Wild West.

"Brothers of our organization of renegades," said Morley, rising to his feet when the laughter was over. "I am sorry that two of our members are absent. This is the last meeting before the greatest raid that was ever made on the Big

Divide takes place. There is two and a half tons of gold waiting for us in the treasure house below here. All we have got to do is to press a button and it will be open to us. I want you all to get here as soon as you can after quitting work to-morrow. We must all go to work as usual on Monday, too. We do not want to do the least thing to excite suspicion on us. I honestly believe that we are going to accomplish our purpose with the greatest of ease. The Irish twins and Dave Forbes will have the wagons there, and as soon as we load up they will be driven to the cave we occupied before coming here, and which we will go back to immediately after the raid is made. The wagons will be taken where they belong as soon as the gold is dumped from them. That will all be done before the owners of the gold find out that there is any of it gone. I am only sorry that we won't be able to take all that there is there."

Then he gave them some further instructions and the meeting broke up for the night.

CHAPTER X.

THE EXPLOSION.

When Saturday afternoon came our friends had all the preparations made to capture the raiders.

Castine felt jubilant and could hardly wait for the time to come.

Wild had lost his hunting knife the night he was on the mountain, so he cleaned up the one he had in his saddle-bags that morning and stuck it in his belt.

It was the property of the murderer of old Bill Sandy, and it struck him that if Ripping Rube was lurking around the vicinity, as he had reason to believe he was, he might see the knife and give himself away.

The men quit work at five o'clock Saturday, and as they were leaving the mine Young Wild West and his chums followed them, walking with Castine.

They had just reached the spot where the wire was that Wild was going to attach to the battery to make the explosion a little later, when Ripping Rube and Morley came along.

Wild turned as they came up, and the knife in his belt caught the eye of Rube.

He turned deathly pale and quickly started on.

But Wild called him back, for in that one look of fear he recognized the man.

"Aha! Mr. Ripping Rube, so it took the knife to identify you, did it? No wonder I thought I had seen you somewhere before. I can't see why I was so blind. Why! You simply changed your beard so that scar would show, and are wearing the wig you had on when you used this knife on old Bill Sandy!"

A crowd had gathered while the boy was saying this, and they looked in astonishment at Rube, whose face was livid from fear and anger.

Morley very wisely stepped back and had nothing to say.

"Gentlemen!" said Young Wild West, "there stands the murderer of Bill Sandy, the man who was killed and robbed over in Dustville a few weeks ago. Here is the knife he did it with."

He held up the knife, and as he did so an ominous growl came from the men.

They had all heard about the murder, and it being such a heartless and cruel one, they were ready to hang Ripping Rube right then and there.

Wild had not thought they would do anything like this, and when he saw some of the men grab the villain and others running to find a rope, he interposed.

"Let him alone," whispered Castine. "That fellow is one of the renegades, anyhow."

So Wild said no more.

A few minutes later a rope was procured and in the twinkling of an eye a noose was made and placed about the wretch's neck.

As they dragged him away to a neighboring tree he pleaded for his life, but it was no use.

The angered men would not listen to him.

"Confess!" cried one of them, "and make your peace with your Maker."

"I'll own up!" shrieked Rube. "I killed old Bill Sandy. How Young Wild West came to find it out I don't know. I suppose I've got to go, so be quick about it. I—"

That was as far as he got, for at that instant the rope tightened and he was jerked into the air.

Our friends turned away, for they had no desire to witness such scenes.

Half an hour later they all departed but Morley and a few others, among whom were our friends.

"I'll cut him down," said Morley, "an' see that he's buried. I didn't know he was a murderer, or I wouldn't have spoke for a job for him."

He cut the body down and left it where it fell.

Then he bade Wild and the rest good-night and left the spot.

It was getting toward sunset and Morley had other business on hand, besides the burying of a corpse.

Though he felt a little sorry over the sudden end of Ripping Rube, the captain of the raiders did not forget what was to be done.

And Young Wild West did not forget, either.

Morley had scarcely disappeared from the scene when the men they had selected began to take their positions one by one, among the rocks and bushes.

Charlie and Jim were among them, of course.

It was decided that Wild and Castine should be the ones to set off the can of nitro-glycerine.

A few minutes before sunset they were seated in a clump of shrubbery near the body of Ripping Rube.

Castine had brought the battery with him, and Wild quickly connected it with the wire that lay concealed in the grass.

Then from their place of concealment they saw three mule teams drive across the open space behind the treasure house. Castine held his watch in his hand, watching the seconds as they ticked away.

"It's time for the sun to set!" he whispered suddenly. "Now, be ready!"

"All right," answered our hero. "As soon as I see the powder flash I will let it go."

But half a minute slipped by, and there was no flash yet.

Castine nervously arose to his feet.

"Something must be wrong," he said. "I see some of the scoundrels sneaking down toward the treasure house."

"How many of them, about?"

"A dozen, I should say."

"Well, the men have instructions not to do anything until after the explosion takes place, and the majority of them can't see what is going on over there. When the renegades get close to the building I will press the button, anyway. It will give them a scare, and before they get over it the men will be upon them."

"All right. I will tell you when."

Half a minute later Castine cried:

"Now!"

As Wild pressed the button a deafening explosion rang out and the air was filled with debris and the bodies of the treacherous gang.

Though it had been well planned, the raid had proven disastrous to the renegades.

But what was the surprise of Young Wild West and Castine when they saw the treasure house go to wreck in the twinkling of an eye!

They could scarcely believe their eyes.

"Some one changed the wire," said our hero, shaking his head positively. "I am sorry I pressed the button, for I have wrecked the treasure house completely."

"Yes," answered Castine, grimly, "and there's mighty few of the renegades left to tell the tale. It is all a mistake, I know, but I am satisfied the way it is."

The men who had been waiting for the renegades to appear were as badly astonished as Wild and Castine were.

The trap had been sprung, to be sure, but it was not in the way they expected it.

But they quickly gathered around the treasure house.

Wild and Castine soon got there, and as they looked around they saw that the explosion had wrought fearful havoc.

Only three of the renegades had escaped of those who had been grouped there.

One of these was badly wounded.

The other two were quickly made prisoners, and when they found the jig was up they confessed all.

From them Young Wild West learned that the Irish twins and another man had got away.

They had been waiting with the mule wagons, and they had been far enough away from the explosion so as to escape unhurt.

"We want them, then!" exclaimed Castine. "I want every man who had a hand in the plot to blow up the treasure house and steal the gold. This is the most daring attempt at robbery I have heard of in a long while. I am glad that more than half the scoundrels got what was coming to them."

Wild, Charlie and Jim at once started to find the men who had got away.

"What made the mine under the building explode?" asked Jim as they hurried along. "I thought you had fixed the wire so it could not be set off."

"So I did, but some one must have fixed the wire again. I can account for it in no other way. I know I cut the wire the villains laid and arranged it so it would connect with some powder and cause a flash when Morley pressed the button. But no flash came, and when I saw the renegades come down I made up my mind that their battery had failed to work, or that something was wrong with the wire. I pressed the button that sent the fiends to a horrible, but quick, death. I did not know I was doing it, though. If I had known that our wire was connected with the mine the renegades laid I should not have fired it. It is against my principle to slaughter, you know."

"Yes, I know all about you, Wild. I am like you in that respect."

The rest of the men who had been engaged to come there and assist in the capture of the men who had escaped, were out looking for the fugitives, and our three friends resolved to get ahead of them, if they could.

Wild was following the wire Morley had laid, and when he saw that it passed in a narrow crack beside a rock, he very naturally took hold of the rock and tried to move it.

Much to his satisfaction, it rolled over, disclosing the fissure that led to the cave of the renegades.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed, in a whisper. "Now, be on the lookout for some one."

They pushed on through the fissure and the next moment stood in the cave.

At this juncture they heard footsteps, and then a man suddenly appeared before them.

It was the fellow Morley had spoken of as Dave Forbes.

"Hands up!" said Wild, quietly. "Don't go to making a fuss now. You are our prisoner, and that's all there is about it."

"All right," answered the man, his face turning the color of ashes. "It is all up, I s'pose."

"Yes, it is all up. Where are the other two fellows who got away?"

"They might be home at their shanty, or in ther other cave," he said quickly enough, for he was in mortal fear of that revolver.

"Ah! By the way, Mr. Renegade, which cave was that you had me in and had so much fun with me?"

"This one."

"This one! Are you sure 'of that?"

"Oh, yes! I was right here. I was ther feller what groaned when Morley stuck ther knife in ther dead goat what you thought was a man."

"So Morley was your captain, then?" Wild mused half aloud.

"Wild, I thought you said they took you such a long ways in a wagon before they got you to ther cave?" Charlie asked.

Just the vestige of a grin came over the face of the prisoner at this.

"I reckon they did take him a ridin' in a wagon," he remarked. "That was done to make him believe our hangout was a good big distance from ther town. Morley didn't want to kill Young Wild West; he jest wanted to see what kind of stuff he was made of. Then he was goin' to give him some good advice and let him go."

"Come on! We want to find the Irish twins. You will now take us to where you think they are," said Wild, as they walked outside.

"Can't you see to it that I git it a little light for showin' you where to find ther Irishmen. S'pose you was to recommend to Castine an' ther rest that I ought to be allowed fifteen minutes to git out of town."

"Yes," Wild answered, "I'll do it."

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

The twins, Mike and Pat, had started to run the same time Forbes did.

They saw it was all up with the renegades, so they headed for the place they first thought of, which was home.

It was just as it got dark that they came in sight of the shanty.

Just then a simultaneous cry of alarm came from their lips.

The shanty was on fire!

It was yet a quarter of a mile away, and forgetting all about what had happened at the treasure house of the mine, the two men darted for the spot.

They were thinking of the weak-minded old woman they called mother.

On they ran, neither uttering a word.

The flames were coming through the roof now, and they were looking with distended eyes for some signs of their mother.

But she was nowhere to be seen.

Both men reached the door at the same time.

Crash!

They burst it in without attempting to lift the latch.

A cloud of smoke and flame burst out upon them, and staggering, they shrank back.

"Mother! Where are yez?" cried Mike.

But there was no answer.

The poor old woman was beyond the dark shadow that hung over her so long.

The body was found later right on the spot where she had rock and crooned while her boys were out on evil bent.

Young Wild West and his partners, with their prisoner, were on the crest of a little slope a mile away when they saw the fire.

"That's either ther shanty of ther twins, or ther barn!" exclaimed Forbes.

"The villains have gone home and set it on fire, then," said Jim.

"No, they wouldn't do that. They'd have no place to take their mother then."

"Well, it may be that they are not there, and that the place has caught fire accidentally. If there is an old woman in danger of her life we ought to hurry."

By the time our friends got there the lean-to was burned to the ground.

As they looked around they suddenly saw, in the light from the embers of the ruins, two forms lying on the ground.

Walking over to them, Wild leaned over and saw that they were the Irish twins.

They were not dead.

"Get up!" he commanded.

Slowly they raised their heads.

Both were weeping bitterly.

Such a sight as that made Young Wild West tender-hearted.

He turned away and left them.

A few minutes later Cheyenne Charlie went over to them, and, after disarming them, tied their hands behind their backs.

They submitted to this without a murmur.

"Mother is in there," said Pat, pointing to the smoking ruins.

"How did ther place git afire, anyway?" questioned Charlie.

"We don't know. We was after runnin' as fast as we could to git away from yez, when we sees the shanty afire. We run all the harder, because we knowed mother was there. When we got there the poor old soul was burned to a crisp, an' we could not git to her. Oh! this is our punishment for not doin' as she wanted us to!" and then they both began to cry and rave.

Our friends started for the town with the twins.

A few minutes later they reached the town with the three prisoners.

There were those in the excited crowd that thronged the single street who were for hanging the three at once.

But Young Wild West would have nothing like that.

Wild took the three prisoners right to the hotel with him.

The landlord was willing to furnish the room to lock them up in, so they were put in it.

Wild locked the door and went downstairs.

He was met by one of the workmen from the mine.

"One of ther wounded renegades wants to see you," he said.

"Where is he?"

"Over in ther lock-up."

He followed the man to the lock-up, which was not more than a hundred yards distant.

A man with a pale face and his arm in a sling sat on a chair in the little office at the entrance.

It was Morley.

"Don't break your promise!" he said in a low tone.

Young Wild West gave a start.

"Things have taken a big change, it seems," he remarked.

"Yes," was the laconic reply.

"You did not expect anything like this, I suppose?"

"I must have had an idea that something would happen, or I wouldn't have said what I did to you the other night, would I?"

"Well, there might be something in that. Are you hurt badly, Morley?"

"I am waiting for a doctor to come and cut off my arm. But what is the use of having it done? They are going to lynch us all, they say."

"Oh! I guess they won't lynch you. Go ahead and let the doctor fix you up. I will see Castine right away."

Wild walked back to the hotel.

He soon found Castine and called him aside.

"See here," he said in an earnest tone, "there has been enough bloodshed, don't you think so?"

"Well, I suppose there has," was the reply. "Why do you ask me such a question as that, Wild?"

"The terrible mistake to-night killed a whole lot of renegades, did it not?"

"It certainly did, but they deserved it, didn't they?"

"Yes, when you come right down to it, they did deserve it. But don't you think it would be a good idea to give those we have captured a chance to start out anew? Suppose we wait till to-morrow morning, and then give them fifteen minutes to get out of town?"

"Do you think that would be a good thing to do?"

"Yes."

"Well, then it is up to you. You have done a whole lot for us, and we are not going to refuse any request you make."

"Thank you, Mr. Castine."

"I'll give it out that you are going to be the judge and have the prisoners brought before you in the morning and tried."

"Very well."

Castine did so, telling everybody who came in the place.

The next morning a little after eight Wild sent Jim to the room where the three prisoners were confined.

When Jim came back a few minutes later he only had one man with him.

It was Forbes.

"Where are the Irish twins?" he asked.

"Dead, I guess," said Forbes solemnly.

"What do you mean?" demanded Wild.

"They chewed each other loose and then jumped out of the window. I heard a splash an' then all was still."

Our friends went outside and around to the side of the building where the window was.

Directly beneath it was a wide, old-fashioned well with a box curb.

As soon as it was given out that the two men had leaped from the window a pole with a hook at the end of it was brought out.

In a few minutes both bodies were fished out.

Wild shook his head and turned toward the lock-up, Forbes walking at his side.

Morley was lying on a cot with his arm bandaged.

The physician had taken off the hand at the wrist.

There were two more prisoners, and when they were brought out Young Wild West stepped upon a chair in front of the lock-up, and taking off his hat, said:

"Gentlemen, somebody changed the wires last night, or before last night, rather, and the result was that a whole lot of men were blown into the air when no one expected it. There are a few survivors of that renegade gang that planned to raid the treasure house up at the mine, and I have come to the conclusion that they have been punished enough by what they saw last night. Therefore, as judge, I declare that they shall be given fifteen minutes to leave this town, and never return to it, under penalty of being shot on sight!"

A cheer went up at this.

Morley and the rest lost no time in getting out of town, and as the ex-leader of the renegades went, he turned and said to Wild:

"You did not break your promise."

After that things went along smoothly at the new mine.

In a few days Young Wild West and his partners went back to their home in Weston, satisfied that they had had a lively time of it while they were on the Big Divide.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S MILLION IN GOLD; OR, THE BOSS BOY OF BOULDER."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

While walking along the road leading from Juliette to Holy Grove, Ga., recently, Messrs. J. W. Simpson and Drew Jackson found a rattlesnake five feet long. When they had killed the snake it was found to have eight rattles and a button, the rattles being retained as a souvenir and to substantiate their claim.

Goats kept within the confines of Connersville, Pa., must be bathed once a week. This is the edict of Mayor Rockwell Marietta, following the prosecution of Harry Rosenberg on the charge of keeping an obnoxious animal. The mayor, after hearing Rosenberg's plea, decided that if the goat must live within the city it shall not be a nuisance to the neighbors.

Acting on impressions received in a dream, which was repeated four nights, always indicating the location of fabulous wealth, Andrew Nelson, an old-time prospector, has struck a ledge rich in virgin gold. The news of the strange find has created a stir in Anaconda, and a rush of prospectors to the cliff above Flint Creek, Mont., has also resulted.

One of the latest inventions of war significance in the United States is that of Dr. Leon Koplowitz, of Hancock, Mich., who has devised what he calls a "sub-sea-scope." The instrument works on the same principle as a periscope, and by means of it a person can locate objects under water as far as ten miles away. While not clear at that distance, the objects may be seen plainly enough to distinguish what they are and in what direction they move.

The island of Sumatra, now in course of development as a tea producer, and reported to be capable of producing heavy yields from mature plants, has followed up last year's introductory period by larger supplies, and the industry has received much encouragement from the abnormally high values of the past year. The teas have already secured a "good-will" in the market. The area under tea now approaches 8,000 acres, nearly all of which have been opened out on the east coast from Assam seed.

New York State produces less than one-third of the raw material used in her wood industries. In spite of the popular impression that the introduction of concrete, brick and steel is doing away with the use of wood, it has been found that the State is yearly using more wood per capita than ever before. More than twice as much wood is used per person to-day than fifty years ago. More than six times as much wood per person is used in New York State than in Germany, and more than ten times as much as in Great Britain.

The grapes on the famous Hampton Court vine, which is 117 years old, are now almost ripe, and within a short time a start will be made with the cutting of the fruit.

This year about 200 bunches were left to mature, after the thinning-out process early in the year, and these will in due course be forwarded to the King, who sends the fruit to various London hospitals and other institutions for the use of the patients, which now include a large number of wounded soldiers. Only a small proportion of the grapes is reserved for use at the King's table. The grapes are exceptionally fine, and many of the bunches weigh from two to three pounds each.

A method of locking a nut upon a bolt in such a way that it cannot work loose is the object of a patent recently granted to William Johnson, of Pittsfield, Mass. The bolt is the ordinary screw bolt, but has a flat edge down one side. Upon this a washer, made of spring steel, is placed. The straight edge of the hole in the washer fits that of the bolt, thus making it immovable. The surface of the washer is punched with round bosses. The under surface of the nut is bored with the same number of holes as there are bosses and of equal size. When the nut is screwed down the bosses yield under pressure until the nut is driven home, when they fit into the holes. The nut cannot work loose, but can be removed easily with a wrench.

Vincent De Cosmo, six years old, of 76 Congress street, Newark, N. J., is dead, and his four-year-old brother Joseph is in a serious condition from drinking whisky. Joseph will probably recover. Two years ago he drank carbolic acid and had a narrow escape. The children were accustomed to see their father put whisky in his coffee at breakfast. When he left for work the other morning he told his wife to sleep late, as she was not feeling well. About an hour later Mrs. De Cosmo was awakened by the younger son resting on her shoulder, crying: The boy told his mother he could not walk; that he and "Jimmy"—they called Vincent "Jimmy"—had drunk some of their father's whisky. Mrs. De Cosmo found Vincent stretched on the floor. She called a doctor, who pronounced the boy dead.

The war has revealed this country as the world's greatest potential headquarters of materials of warfare. We can manufacture not only more ammunition than any European country, but more than all European countries combined. England, at the present moment, is turning out 400,000 explosive shells a day and France 200,000. Experts say that the United States can turn out 1,000,000 a day without utilizing more than a small part of its resources. Our largest concerns, such as the United States Steel Corporation, have not entered the business on any appreciable scale. If this corporation should turn its factories into ammunition centers, there would be practically no limit to its products. It has the materials in enormous quantity, it has shops and mills almost without end, and it has the necessary number of workmen.

BROTHER X

— OR —

THE GOBBLERS OF TURKEY NECK

By **DICK ELLISON**

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVIII (continued)

"Tolland left the money with me," said Burton in a low voice. "He was to join me next day, and we were to go away together in his yacht. That night I was robbed—that's the night the mill took fire. Well, the money was never in my hand after that until now. Who took it I can't say, but I think Jack Ashmore was at the bottom of it. To-night I saw some of his pals, as I believe. I call 'em the Gobblers—I'll explain why later. Well, to cut the story short, I followed them and they brought me to the place where the money was buried. Ha! Ha! Ha! They thought the box was empty, and threw it down. Look here, Ran! Look here!"

He opened the lid and turned the box upside-down. Nothing came out and Ran laughed.

"Well, it looks as though it was empty, all right," he said.

"Perhaps it is, but I don't believe it," replied Burton with a curious chuckle. "Now, Ran, if I give you five thousand dollars, will you do something for me?"

"You bet I will," cried Ran. "I'll do most anything for five thousand dollars."

"Then it's a bargain. While I stay here you go over to Windhaven, hire the Dora D, you know, Blakely's yacht, and come over here. You can make this place before daylight, and we will run over to Long Island. In that way I can escape the detectives, but in no other. Is it a go?"

"Yes. But the money?"

"Look, boy! There is a false bottom to this box!" cried Burton. "See, when I press the spring it opens, and see here!"

He held up the box again.

A drawer had suddenly shot out of the side, and by the moonlight Ran could see that it was packed closely with bills, each one of those exposed being for a thousand dollars.

"Just as I supposed," cried Burton joyfully. "I fooled 'em, Ran! The money is all here!"

There seemed to be a difference of opinion between Superintendent Burton and Brother D's "ghost," for the ghost had declared that the money was at the bottom of the bay.

But it would have been hard for Ran to have believed the ghost, even if that long-bearded apparition had turned up right then and repeated his statement, for there was the thousand-dollar bills right before the boy's astonished eyes.

CHAPTER XIX.

JACK RECOGNIZES THE GHOST.

Fred Farley was not the sort of fellow to waste any time thinking about ghosts once his first scare was over, and he did precisely what any other sensible person would have done under the circumstances, lighted the lantern, and went bounding up the stairs, bursting into the room where he had left Brother X.

Jack evidently had not been disturbed by ghosts. He had dropped off asleep again and lay there on the bed as quietly as possible.

Fred did not disturb him.

Setting down the water pail, he ran from room to room, but no trace could be found of the strange figure which had spoken to him on the stairs.

It was a very mysterious piece of business certainly.

Fred just had to give it up, because he could not do anything else.

He went back into the room and found Jack awake and sitting up on the bed shivering all over.

"Oh, I am so glad you are back again, Fred!" he exclaimed. "I have had such a queer dream. It seemed to me that my father was in the room here. Oh, I feel so strange."

He took a drink from the pail and sank back on the pillow, putting his hands before his eyes.

"Your father is dead, isn't he, Jack?" asked Fred, taking his place in the chair once more.

"No," replied Jack in a low voice, "he is not."

Fred was surprised. He had always heard that Jack's father had died a great many years before.

Once Mr. Ashmore had been foreman of one of the departments of the cutlery works. From this position he was advanced to one of great trust in the office. There were ugly rumors about his honesty among the town traditions in Windhaven, but Fred had, as we have stated, always believed that he was dead, and he said as much in reply.

"I don't want to talk about my father," said Jack in a low, troubled voice. "Tell me about the money, Fred, and how the Gobblers came to go there and try to dig it up."

"Oh, that's easily done," replied Fred, who had already made up his mind to say nothing about the "ghost," and he started in and told about the meeting upon the bridge and the bringing of the tramp over to Turkey Neck.

Fred was greatly interested.

"Did he give the whole snap away when he found himself among the Gobblers?" he asked eagerly.

"That's what he did," replied Fred. "Now I am coming to the interesting part of my story. You see, as near as I can make out, it seems to have been a case of dog eat dog. That man Tolland was at the bottom of the whole business. He was a great scoundrel, and has probably been helping himself to the funds of the cutlery works for years."

"I know that," replied Jack in the same low voice. "That's all true."

"How do you know? What do you mean?" asked Fred.

"Go on," was the reply. "I'll tell you later."

Fred did not insist upon an answer, but resumed.

"It seems that Burton is a regular professional crook," he continued, "and Tolland put him over the works on that account. The robbery was all planned in advance, and Tolland brought the money to the works and it was put in the office safe. It was the payroll for a month, and the dividends which were to have been distributed among the stockholders. The plan was that Tolland and Burton would go away in a yacht together, and the money with them, of course. To turn suspicion for the time being, it was planned to set the works on fire and let the safe be blown open. Burton arranged with two of his old pals, professional crooks like himself, to do the job. These men had turned tramps, and were moving about the country with a gang of real tramps, of which my friend Ambler was one——"

"And they made their headquarters at the old mill, and they were the fellows who drove us out!" broke in Jack.

"Right," said Fred. "It was all arranged to do the job that night. They stole our boats and went over to the works and set the fire, taking Burton with them, but in the meanwhile two of the tramps slipped away, went to Burton's house and climbed in by a ladder we had left at the window. Something he said made them suspect that he was playing them false and had removed all the money from the safe. Well, they found the cash box which we saw, and made off with it. They came back to Turkey Neck and buried it where you saw us dig it up. Then they moved on to Providence, and were arrested there with some others of the gang and put in jail. Ambler was one of those arrested, but not one of those who did the job; he was let out after a short imprisonment, and while he was in jail the two who stole the money told him all. He started back for Windhaven, and probably would have dug up the money alone if he could have kept sober, which he couldn't. He seems to have a soft heart, though, and he tells for you, and he really does seem to be honest. For these reasons, when he met me on the bridge he started in to tell me all about it in order that you might be saved. That's the way he told the story to the Gobblers. It's a strange one, I'll admit, and the fact of our finding the money gone, makes it all the stranger. I'm sure I don't know what to think."

"It's hard to believe that it is true," said Jack, "but I can see how the money got to the table in Burton's room, Fred, and we did leave it behind us."

"That's right."

"And I'll tell you, Fred, I'm going to tell you something, Fred. My father helped Tolland rob the

cutlery works of twenty thousand dollars years ago. Father was tempted by this scoundrel, and then Tolland turned on him and so fixed matters that all the blame fell upon him. It drove father mad, and it killed my mother. For years father was in an asylum, and I often saw him there, but about a year ago he escaped, and has never been captured since. Twice he has come to me in the dead of night, and I have helped him with money. Tolland would never let me be discharged for fear that I knew more than I really did, for actually I knew nothing of that old affair, and—oh, Fred! Father! Father! Oh! Oh!"

Suddenly a tall figure stepped into the room behind Fred.

It was the "ghost," and it was also Jack Ashmore's father, and Brother X, calling him that name, sprang up and threw himself into his arms.

CHAPTER XX.

BARGAINING WITH BURTON.

Brother X had made one discovery and Brother A had made another.

That Ran's discovery was of far greater importance cannot be denied, for, while Jack had found an entirely worthless parent, Ran had found the cash stolen from the works.

That Ran felt very large cannot be denied, either.

There was a reward of \$5,000 offered for Mr. Bart Burton's capture, and as much more was ready for any one who could produce the stolen cash.

"Well, Ran, what do you think now?" asked Mr. Burton, proceeding to take out the bills and stow them away in his pockets. "You don't understand this business, of course."

"That's what I don't," replied Ran, "and I'd like to, just the same."

"Well, I'll explain it to you, although I've got to do a little talking against myself," said Burton, looking nervously around. "You are sure that you are all alone and that there is no one listening? This is no job you are putting up against me, Ran Morgan? If it is, beware! I am heavily armed, and if I thought you would betray me I would have no more compunction about shooting you than I would about killing a mad dog."

Of course Ran disclaimed all idea of betraying him, for he could do nothing else.

"The idea is just this, Ran," said Burton at last. "When I made up my mind to—to—er—that is to say, when I knew that this money was coming into my possession, and that in order to handle it as I wanted to handle it I had to deal with a lot of crooks, I had this box made, and at the same time I bought a great number of Confederate notes which I put carefully up in packages; these I put in the top of the box, while I put the genuine notes in the false bottom, as you have seen. That was the condition of affairs when I was suddenly seized in my room and carried off by a gang of workmen who had disguised themselves with masks representing turkey heads. What happened after that, I am not going into, but while I was away the box was stolen from my room, and I have never seen it from that day to this."

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

KILLED HORNED RABBIT.

Another horned rabbit was killed near Roscoe, Texas, by W. A. Ater, of Roscoe. It was the second cottontail with horns to be found in Texas, and leads to the conclusion on the part of local scientists that there is a distinct breed of this species.

HOOKS BIGGEST PICKEREL.

Fred Armbruster, of Baraboo, Wis., is in a class by himself as a pickerel fisherman. Recently he was out alone and caught a pickerel that weighed forty pounds and two ounces. He spent half an hour in landing the big fellow and was some excited during the operation.

A "MAKER OF RAIN."

Colquitt Chambers, of Rossville, Ga., believes he is a rainmaker. The other day he killed a large blacksnake and hung it up in a bush. A shower came up and gave him a wetting before he could reach shelter. A day or two later he mowed some hay, and this, he thinks, brought another rain. Now people in every section are killing snakes and hanging them up and mowing hay to bring rain.

ROBS WHILE MUSIC PLAYS.

Enter the musical burglar. While a phonograph in the home of Alexis Mossey, South Bend, Ind., was playing "I Want to Go Back to the Farm," an enterprising robber was going through the Mossey residence and making a rich haul. Two diamond rings, several watches and a quantity of money made up his loot. Neighbors, who heard the machine, thought the Mossey family was at home, and the burglar was left to his own devices during the absence of the family. Not until Mrs. Mossey returned at a late hour was the thief known.

INVISIBLE FISHING LINES.

The Department of Commerce has received a collection of fishing lines, illustrating the ingenuity of the Japanese sporting goods manufacturers. They are of the "invisible" sort, and the makers assert that they have proved very successful. They are made of a very fine silk, boiled in a preparation of oil and glue and calendared under heavy pressure. They are called the tegusu lines, and the silk of which they are made is from wild cocoons found in the mountains.

These lines are believed by the Japanese makers to be the strongest and most successful ever devised to use for large, gamey fish. Secretary Redfield examined the collection with great interest, and expressed regret that he had not seen them, when they might have appeared to him more effectively.

PEASANTS EAGER FOR WAR NEWS.

"So intense is the interest in the war among the Russian peasants," says a writer in the Novoe Vremya, "that every train stopping at a wayside station is besieged by

peasants of both sexes and all ages, stretching their hands to the passengers and crying 'Give us a paper.'

"Before the war the Russian peasant looked upon a newspaper as material for rolling up a cigarette. Now he reads it from beginning to end. Every bit of an old newspaper is received as a crust of bread by a starving beggar."

This prompts the writer to urge the establishment of a great People's Newspaper, to be run by the State, not only as a newspaper for the masses, but also as a means of popular education.

"Russia," he says, "has never developed systematically. All her progress has been sudden and by huge strides. Peter the Great started reforming his nobles not by trimming their patriarchal beards, but by shaving them off all at once.

"The Russian people stopped drinking not gradually as a result of a systematic temperance movement, but as a result of a drastic government measure. Why should not a great State newspaper for the people, circulated by the million, educate our people in the shortest time, instead of a slow process of elementary school education?"

A MEXICAN TEMPLE.

The most perfect piece of prehistoric architecture in the new world is the wonderful "mosaic chamber," situated among the famous ruins of the ancient City of Mitla. 30 miles south of the City of Mexico. Although months have been spent by prominent travelers, writers and archaeologists in the attempt to read the history of this old city from the hieroglyphics yet visible on its walls, the only thing known to-day of Mitla or its builders of architecture are the temples and palaces grouped on a slight elevation beside a narrow stream. Even the name of Mitla is of unknown origin.

But while every structure of which this group is composed is covered within and without with mosaics, it remains for the great hall known as the "mosaic chamber" to reveal the work at its best. The marvelous part is that there is not a single piece of tile missing from the entire room. These mosaics were put together without the aid of cement or mortar.

Some portion of the ruins of Mitla had been covered with sand for unknown centuries when the Mexican Government began excavating, but the larger portion of the buildings was above ground, exposed to the elements. About 25 years ago one of the Mitla temples was torn down and a church built with the stones. This the natives call the "new church," although it is nearly 300 years old.

Beneath one of the temples of Mitla an underground chamber has been found and under this is believed to be another subterranean room, which the Mexican Government intends to explore, and archaeologists all over the world will watch with intense interest the efforts made to penetrate the secret of ancient Mitla.

SINBAD THE SECOND

— OR —

The Wonderful Adventures of a New Monte Cristo

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII (continued)

"I jes' done gib him his breakfas', massa."

"Ah! that's right. Feed him well. Did he say anything?"

"Golly, he rabing mad."

"Raving mad, is he? Well, he'll cool down soon."

"'You black t'ief,' he cry. Dat's me, massa. 'Take me to your skipper.'"

"Wants to see me, does he? Very well; bring him in at once."

Stephen Miggs had entirely recovered from the fainting fit into which he had fallen on the previous night, and met Sinbad with an insolent look on his face. He was astonished by the amazing splendor he saw on all sides, but he was plainly determined not to show it, and exhibited complete stolidity.

"You wanted to see me, Stephen Miggs? You are here; what do you want?"

"I demand that you put me ashore."

"Ashore! Why, we are one hundred miles from land."

"Then land me at the nearest port."

Sinbad smiled mockingly.

"What! lose my friend, Steve Miggs, so soon after all the trouble I've had to take him on a voyage with me?"

"Parbleu!" laughed Jacques. "it's not to be thought of."

"You will suffer for this," cried the prisoner.

"How?"

"You will be captured."

"I think not. The Avenger can show a clean pair of heels to any vessel afloat."

"The English Government will scour the seas till they find you."

"They will never find me."

"Never is a long day."

"Granted they do find me—what then?"

Stephen Miggs' face underwent a change. The thoughts that flitted through his mind toned down the bravado he was showing.

"You have not answered my question, Stephen Miggs," said Sinbad. "Very well; I'll answer it for you. Now we'll suppose the Britishers capture us. It's not likely, but for the sake of argument we'll suppose it. My explanation will be a brief one. I shall say Stephen Miggs was the steward of the Swiftsure. He sent five people away from the ship in midocean in an open boat. That was murder—foul murder, cowardly murder. You will bring Stephen Miggs, and nothing will save you!"

The captive clutched the table with a ghastly look on his face as he realized how utterly hopeless his situation was.

"But who are you?" asked the prisoner. "Who gave you any rights over me? I have done no wrong. I know nothing of what you have said about the Swiftsure and the people who you say were murdered."

"We shall see. You shall have every chance."

"You mean I shall be tried?"

"Yes."

"When and where?"

"Patience! You shall have a fair trial, monster that you are! Till then you are at liberty to go where you please on the ship."

Sinbad took up a book which he had been reading, as if to intimate that the interview was over.

Steve Miggs waited a moment, as if he intended to say something. Then he slunk out of the cabin quite crestfallen, a great contrast to the bold manner with which he had entered it.

At the door he half turned around and darted a glance full of hate at Sinbad.

"All is not lost yet," he muttered. "Take care, Sinbad, or I shall kill you!"

The prisoner had anything but a pleasant time aboard the yacht, for, although no restrictions were placed upon him, and he was plentifully fed, yet he found himself shunned by everybody.

He tried to get into conversation with various members of the crew, thinking he might gain some knowledge of the mysterious boy in whose power he was. But his efforts were in vain. None of the sailors would talk with him.

Jacques and Con Cregan watched him closely, fearing that he might make an attack upon Sinbad, but he seemed, as far as possible, to avoid getting near his captor.

So matters went on until the Cape Verde Islands, which are situated in the Atlantic Ocean, off the west coast of Africa, came into view.

Vessels are in the habit of coaling there, and it became necessary for the Avenger to take on a supply, for her coal bunkers were half emptied.

Sinbad, as they were making for the port, found himself near Steve Miggs. The latter, although looking anxious, had a somewhat satisfied expression on his face.

"Mr. Sinbad," he said.

"Well?"

"We shall stay here a considerable time, I imagine."

"Why?"

"Because the British Government will have cabled to the authorities to detain us."

"And you think you may get away? Well, hope on, if it gives you any pleasure. I have no misgivings."

True enough, before the ship had half loaded with coal, a boat came along, containing a man who, from the gold-laced uniform he wore, seemed to be in authority. He drew up alongside the ship, and, coming on board, was conducted to the cabin.

There a splendid banquet was laid out, and Sinbad very politely invited the officer to partake.

It was clear that the magnificence that prevailed everywhere on the yacht had made its effect felt. The official bowed low to the boy Sinbad as if he was talking to an emperor.

He did not reply for a moment to Sinbad's invitation, seeming somewhat confused.

"I came here on a very different errand, sir," he said. "In fact, on a matter of business."

"Dinner first," laughed Sinbad, gayly. "Afterwards as much business as you please."

It seemed impossible to refuse such a courteous invitation, so the official sat down without making any further protests.

He could scarcely eat for astonishment. The table was loaded with dishes and plates, most of them made of solid gold, and the wine, of which he was a judge, was the choicest he had ever tasted.

"You are admiring that glass?" said Sinbad, as he noticed his guest holding it to the light.

"Yes, I admit it. In what country do they make such beautiful glass?"

"It is not glass," answered Sinbad, carelessly. "It is a crystal hollowed out. I have a large number of them. But come, I don't wish to hurry you. We are alone now; let us dispose of the business on which you came to see me."

"Really, I hardly know what to say. I'm afraid I've made a mistake. I have received instructions to look out for a yacht called the Avenger."

"The Avenger! Ah! I know nothing of that."

"What is the name of your vessel, sir?"

"The Lady Claire. You will see that for yourself."

Sinbad had foreseen this visit, and he had taken precautions. The name Avenger had been painted out, and that of Lady Claire substituted.

"But what is this yacht Avenger wanted for?"

"The owner has committed some great crime against the British laws."

"Ha! Ha! Don't flatter me, but do I look like the perpetrator of a dreadful crime?"

"No, no; but still——"

"What?"

"Your yacht answers the description sent me."

"A beautiful stone this," said Sinbad, changing the conversation with startling abruptness, indicating an immense brilliant which glittered on his finger as he spoke.

"It is superb."

"Take it, put it on your own finger. You will be able to judge it better so."

The official looked at it covetously, and as he was about to hand it back Sinbad prevented him from doing so.

"Oblige me by keeping it, sir," said Sinbad. "It seems to me it even looks better on your hand than on mine, don't you agree with me?"

The official, overwhelmed with the magnificence of the gift, stammered out his thanks.

"How foolish of me," he said. "I was about to arrest your ship. What could have possessed me to make such a terrible mistake?"

"The best of men make them."

They were at the gangway now, and the visitor bade Sinbad a cordial good-by. Then he went off in his boat.

Steve Miggs was looking on, and was surprised at the termination of the visit, the object of which he had surmised.

"You are disappointed?" said Sinbad.

"I do not understand it."

"The explanation is simple. Every man has his price."

That same night with loaded bunkers the Avenger was once more on its way.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SEARCH FOR THE MANDARIN, HUNG LU—A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.

The Avenger sailed on its long voyage, rounding Cape Horn, and then on through the Pacific in a northwesterly direction without any incident of an exciting nature to disturb the monotony of the journey.

"It's Eldorado we'll be seeing soon, masther," said Con.

"We shall stop before we get there."

"Shure, an' ye're not goin' huntin' for any more spalpeens?"

"No, but I'm going into the fate of our Chinese friend, Hung Lu. You recollect we left him on an island inhabited by savages?"

"Parblen! if we find his bones it's all we can expect."

"I don't agree with you, Jacques."

"You think we may find his clothes, too, because they're not eatable?"

"More than his bones and his clothes. Hung Lu himself is there alive and well in my opinion, probably king of the island by this time."

"That cannot be. Why should they spare him?"

"Because he escaped from us. They saw that. We are their enemies in their opinion, therefore Hung Lu is their friend."

"Masther, it's a great brain ye have, anyway."

"Oh, I don't maintain I'm right, but my views are probably enough to make it worth our while to search the island. This mandarin is Saul Dexter beyond a doubt. What! do you think I'm going to allow the captain of the Swiftsure to escape me?"

"It's a dangerous job ye're settin' us."

"If you're afraid, say so, and stay behind."

"Is it Con Cregan's afraid? Shure, there's only one thing in the world makes me shake."

"What's that, Con?"

(To be continued)

INTERESTING ARTICLES

TRAPS MANY GROUNDHOGS.

Carl Lantis, who came from the East to help harvest wheat, is now trapping gophers in Kansas. It is a new industry. He has taken 300 with seventy-five traps. He gets five cents a head from the county and ten cents a head from the farmers. Several large alfalfa fields have been rid of the pests.

"HELLO" GIRL'S BRIGHT WIT.

Robbery of the State National Bank of Ransomville, Niagara County, N. Y., was foiled early the other day by the quick wit of a telephone girl, who "rang up" the bank just as the robbers, five in number, were about to blow open the inner door of the bank vault.

The robbers had succeeded in blowing open the fireproof door of the safe proper when frightened away. They escaped in an automobile.

FOR FOOTBALL PLAYERS.

For hardening his men and putting them in condition for scrimmage work the coach of the Carlisle football team has devised a work-out apparatus which not only serves to strengthen the shoulder, back and thigh muscles of a player, but also tends to develop and drill him for line positions, says Popular Mechanics. It is made of heavy timbers, has a sled-like base, and on the front side is provided with seven heavily padded upright planks. The weight of the device amounts to a little more than 1,000 pounds, or approximately the equivalent of that of seven average players.

WORLD'S GREATEST CONGREGATION.

Comparative figures compiled from reports made to the recent General Assembly at Boston, Mass., show that Seattle, Wash., has the largest Presbyterian congregation in the world.

This is the First Presbyterian Church of Seattle. It has a membership of 5,652 communicants. Dr. Mark A. Matthews, a former moderator of the General Assembly, is pastor.

Bethany Church of Philadelphia, widely known as John Wanamaker's church, is the next nearest competitor. It has a membership of 3,196. Central Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, N. Y., is third, with 2,931 communicants. The famous Fifth Avenue Church of New York, generally recognized as the wealthiest and most liberal of Presbyterian congregations, with gifts to benevolences and religious work totaling more than \$600,000 yearly, is fifth in numerical strength among American Presbyterian churches. Its membership is exceeded by the Brick Church, of Rochester, N. Y.

The figures give some interesting statistics. Churches where Bible Sunday held meetings in 1913 show notable gains in the 1914 report, but diminished gains in the 1915 report.

Brooklyn First Church, which made a gain of 377 in

last year's report, shows a gain of only 150 this year. Pittsburgh Homewood Avenue Church, whose gain was 232 last year, gained only 79 this year. Pittsburgh Hazelwood Church, gaining 214 last year, gains only 80 this year. Pittsburgh Second Church, gaining 200 last year, gains only 107 this year. Wilkes-Barre Memorial, whose membership increased 303 according to last year's report, experienced a gain of only 16 new members this year. Johnstown First Church gained 299 last year, but only 58 this year.

NEW YORK'S WATER SUPPLY.

Here are some figures from the annual report of William Williams, Commissioner of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, made public recently:

Average daily consumption of water in the five boroughs, 545,000,000 gallons. Of this 347,000,000 gallons is used in Manhattan and the Bronx, 134,000,000 gallons in Brooklyn, 15,000,000 gallons in Queens and 12,000,000 gallons in Richmond.

The \$147,000,000 Catskill water supply will be available by the end of 1916. It will yield 250,000,000 gallons a day.

In cleaning out caterpillars on the Croton watershed in 1914 the department destroyed 50,000 wild cherry trees and 5,000 apple trees.

Length of city-owned water mains in Greater New York, 2,845 miles, not including the high pressure mains. There are 60,700 gates on the mains and 47,500 fire hydrants, of which 4,100 are on the high pressure service.

Value of real estate of the department, \$168,000,000, of which \$82,000,000 represents dams and other structures.

Value of all landed and non-landed property of the department, \$227,237,027. Funded debt of the department, \$93,240,400.

Total area of city-owned water supply property, including reservoirs, 25,000 acres.

There are still some private water companies in Brooklyn, Queens and Richmond. They supply 37,000,000 gallons a day.

Total annual water revenue, \$13,000,000, of which about half comes from metered premises.

Total current expenses of the department, \$11,600,000, of which \$3,570,000 went for wages of 2,800 employees.

Length of lighted streets, 2,613 miles.

Area of lighted parks, ten square miles.

Number of lamps in city service, 40,653 electric and 45,161 gas.

All gas lampposts belong to the city. Most of the electric lampposts belong to the lighting companies.

Nitrogen electric lamps are being substituted for arc lamps. They are cheaper and brighter.

Number of structures in the city lighted by electricity, 180,000.

When the Catskill water supply comes in, the Brooklyn water supply, located on Long Island, will be shut down and kept in reserve.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

There were 1,666,987 automobiles in use in the United States at the end of 1914. The revenue paid to the States from automobile licenses amounted to \$12,270,036, and chauffeurs' fees reached the total of \$427,179.

Queer freaks were played by a cloudburst which swept over a section of Frederick County, Md. County Commissioner Frank M. Stevens, of Creagerstown, lost two cows. He found one of them in the fork of a peach tree seven feet from the ground. Samuel Geisbert, of Creagerstown, who thought he had taken every movable object from his cellar, lost a barrel of vinegar.

In Lancashire, England, the cotton waste has an annual value of \$75,000,000. This vast sum is represented by fag-ends and sweepings and pickings and combings. Thousands of women are employed to divide this stuff into good, middling and bad, and it is sold at various prices for different purposes—papermaking, matting, surgical wadding and, most of all, the making of shoddy.

Removal of a shrapnel bullet from the right auricle of a French soldier's heart was described to the Academy of Medicine in Paris by Dr. Charles Infroit. This surgical feat was accomplished by use of a radiographic compass invented by the surgeon. This instrument enables Dr. Infroit to locate foreign bodies in the tissues with mathematical precision and permits their extraction without injury to the neighboring organs, he said.

There is no teacher to ring the bell at the schoolhouse at Freedom, Wis., because of legal proceedings. Miss Anna Garvey is restrained by an injunction obtained by Miss Katherine Van Dyck. Both want the job of ringing the bell. The teacher is paid \$75 per month, and each morning and noon she must ring the bell. The rest of the day she may do as she pleases. Usually there are no pupils.

The prices of guns have increased from ten to fifteen per cent., the New York Evening Post tells us. The .30.30-caliber piece, which is a favorite among big game hunters, is difficult to obtain even at the advanced price,

as it is the caliber of most of the rifles used by the infantry of the warring nations in Europe. Ammunition also has gone up ten per cent. in price, and is obtainable only in small quantities. Automatic pistols are scarce and the prices on them have advanced considerably. Other pistols and revolvers may be obtained at a slight increase in price, but these are being drawn almost entirely from the supply that was on hand when the war broke out. Field glasses have not only advanced in price, but are almost unobtainable. Prism binoculars which formerly sold for \$25 a pair are now bringing \$60. The ordinary field glasses, the material for which comes mostly from France, are not to be had. The manufacturers of binoculars and field glasses in this country are said to be selling their entire output to the European governments.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"There is a school in Europe where only noblemen's sons are admitted." "A sort of Knight School, I suppose."

"I think I'll spend my two weeks' vacation on my new automobile." "Where are you going?" "Oh, ten or fifteen miles out of town."

"Here's a piece of music, miss, that costs 40 cents." "Oh, can't you give me anything more difficult? Last week I played one that cost 75 cents."

"How is it that you're getting married? You've always boasted that you didn't care for women." "I don't. But I care an awful lot for one woman."

Tommy—Ma, may I have Jimmy Briggs over to play on Saturday? Mrs. Fogg—No; you make too much noise. You'd better go down to his house and play.

Lady (to tramp)—You can have something to eat if you'll work for it. Tramp (with extreme dignity)—Madam, would you ask me to stultify myself?

"What makes you think he was born ignorant?" "Because so young a man could never have acquired through his own efforts all the ignorance he possesses."

Fred—You won't lend me a "V"? Why, you loaned an "X" to Burroughs, and he's almost a stranger to you. Ned—Well? Fred—Well, I'm an old friend— Ned—Exactly, and I don't want to lose you.

"I say, me good man," began the dude, as he entered the butcher's dissecting room, "have you aw any meat for a puppy, doncher know?" "Sure thing," replied the butcher. "Want to eat it here or take it with you?"

Pat—Yez may say wot yez plaze, gentlemin; it's not anywhere ye'll be foindin' braver min nor th' Irish. Bawter—Come off, Pat; it was only the other night that I made five of them run. Pat—Was it long catagin' yo they were?

A GAMBLER'S MADNESS.

By Alexander Armstrong

Few people know how hard it is to rid one's self of the fever of gambling when once the passion is fairly aroused.

Gambling of any kind is something to be avoided as one would avoid the most fearful plague. It brings nothing in its track but ruin to the purse and wreck to the mind.

One mistaken idea held by most people is that only men who are careless of money, or place slight value on it, are the ones who gamble. This is hardly the case, for most gamblers love money as misers do, and are enticed to gamble by the reflection that they may win a great deal.

Just such a man was George Hyatt.

He was a miser in his habits, and would hesitate about spending twenty-five cents for a dinner, yet would place as many dollars on a card in the hope that it would win largely for him.

Left a snug fortune at the death of his father, he had no need of working, and the time he found hanging heavily on his hands passed pleasantly when he commenced to gamble.

With varying success he played day after day, sometimes winning, most frequently losing, but ever pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp at the gaming table.

For five or six years he kept this up, at the expiration of which he had lost fully fifty thousand dollars. He could and would win this back, he told himself.

But fate was against him.

He lost speedily, until one day he found himself with barely five thousand dollars of all the inheritance left him.

A strong mind had been weakened by the insidious passion, and he now had become fanciful, and among other things had come to believe in dreams.

He had a dream the night before.

It was something about a negro on a white horse. For a long, long time the negro seemed to ride the horse; and on the negro's forehead were the words "bad luck." But as his dream progressed, the order of things was reversed suddenly, and on a black horse was a white man, on whose forehead was "good luck."

It meant to him that his day of ill-fortune had passed, that henceforth he would win. He believed it implicitly, and putting in his pockets every dollar he had in the world he started forth to prove the truth of his dream.

And he proved the untruth of it instead.

Excited to the highest degree, he put down bet after bet, only to see it taken in by the dealer.

A thousand—two thousand—three thousand dollars were lost.

Prudence bade him stop. But his dream! It would be destiny fate to stop now.

No, luck must turn soon.

But still he lost, and continued to lose until but five hundred dollars were left.

And this—with staring eyes, flushed face, and hands and body trembling with nervousness and intense excitement—

he was now a beggar.

He seemed dazed, unable to comprehend the truth for a full minute, and then he began to shriek and yell, and madly beat his head with his hands, and continued to do so until his roving, bloodshot eyes rested on the dealer's face.

His money—the money he loved so dearly, but knew not how to care for—was gone, and this man had robbed him of it, he told himself; and with a cry like that of a wounded and savage tiger, he sprang upon the dealer, clutched his throat, and with demoniac fury beat his head against the wall, cutting it and bruising it, until the dealer lost consciousness.

He would have killed him outright had not strong hands, and many of them, been laid on him and dragged him away from his victim.

They shuddered as they gazed at George Hyatt, for his losses had unsettled his reason, and he was stark mad.

"Gold—gold!" he shrieked. "Ha-ha! see it flying about. There—there—there—all through the air," and he began to clutch eagerly at empty space. "Gold—gold—why can't I get hold of it? See it fly! Blame it—why does it elude me? It slips right through my fingers—stop it—stop it. Ha! there's a piece as big as a saucer! see how slow it goes! I'll get that one—ha-ha! easy now—easy!" and, shaking off the hands which detained him, he crouched down like a panther preparing for a spring. His face was lighted by joyous expectation, his fingers worked nervously, his lips were parted, his expression strained and intense. Suddenly he sprang, made a wild clutch, then uttered a howl of raging despair. "Blame it—it escaped me! It slipped aside just as my fingers reached it! See—it's moving slow again, now—it's coming nearer! Ha-ha! I'll catch it this time!"

Poor fellow!

He did not catch it then, nor ever after, though not a day passed that he did not spend hours in madly clutching at the imaginary pieces of gold he saw drifting about in the air.

One little piece of property was left to him, the house in which he had lived. This was taken charge of, and the proceeds were sufficient to support him in the asylum of which I was in charge.

(The reader will remember I am quoting from a manuscript.)

I studied his case through many a week and month to see if nothing could be done to restore him to reason. At last I gave it up as a hopeless case. Reason would never reassume her sway.

Generally he was mild and gentle, almost melancholy, save when each day—at the very hour when he had lost that last bet—his "spells" came on.

Then he would shout, and curse, and madly plunge about, grasping at the air, filled with flying gold which always eluded his grasp.

He had not been long in custody when we learned that he was not always to be trusted. It chanced that one of the keepers passed near him, wearing a gold watch chain.

In an instant the mad gambler was on his feet, begging for it.

"Gold—gold!" he exclaimed, his eager, sparkling eyes fastened on the chain lovingly. "Gold—gold! Give it to me!"

"Keep away!" growled the keeper.

"Won't you give it to me?" he pleaded.

"No."

In an instant the pleading mood was transformed into one of mad fury.

He leaped on the keeper and bore him down, so great was the strength his rage gifted him with. And tearing away the trophy—the gold chain—he dashed into his room with it.

The keeper was dead when we picked him up, we having been attracted to the spot by the mad shrieks of the gambler and the cries of the keeper.

I had Hyatt put in a straightjacket, but soon found that there was no need of it, for he was always mild unless he caught sight of gold. And then he became positively dangerous.

Occasionally people came to visit the asylum, and I gave strict orders that none should be permitted to enter the ward where Hyatt was while a single bit of gold or jewelry of any kind was visible about their person.

In showing several parties through the asylum, I noticed that Hyatt's eyes would light up at their approach, and then that he would stealthily scan them from head to foot.

One day, during my absence, a party of visitors arrived. By an oversight, a lady member of the party was admitted to the hall wearing in her hat a brass dagger as an ornament.

He saw it: to him it was gold, for he judged by the color alone. In an instant he was before her pleading for it. She shrank away in alarm, and Hyatt, fearing she should escape, sprang at her with all the ferocity of a mad dog.

He would surely have killed her had not the keeper sprang swiftly to her assistance and knocked Hyatt insensible to the floor.

After that I had him barred off from the main part of the hall.

As regular as clockwork he grabbed for the gold flying in the air, never stopping until exhausted, when he would fall asleep, and on waking would be mild and tractable again until the same hour the day following.

Thus years passed, and his hair and beard had turned to gray. Not that he was an old man, but the high nervous excitement under which he daily labored was aging him before his time.

For a long time we had no trouble with him, owing to our precaution of never letting him set his eyes on anything bright or of the color of gold.

Going through the hall one day I observed him standing by his window, intently watching where some workmen were digging.

I heard him chuckle, and then he muttered:

"I know what they're doing: they're digging for gold! Ha-ha! they think I don't know that the bright, shining stuff comes out of the dirty ground—but I do—I do!"

By some means unknown, and concealing his movements with the shrewdness of a madman, he managed to dig out the lead setting of the iron bars of his window, and one day, as I sat in my office, the alarm came that Hyatt had escaped.

"Gold—gold!" he shrieked, as he dashed among the workmen engaged in digging, and began to scratch in the

newly turned-up earth, sifting it through his fingers in search of the precious metal.

A minute or two spent thus, and then he uttered a yell of mingled disappointment and rage. Seeing the keepers coming, he dashed away, reached the road and bounded along it like the wind.

Meeting a boy with brass buttons on his coat, he flung the child down and tore off the buttons, then resumed his flight, finally entering a bit of woods.

This was beaten by the keepers, who started him from his lair some time after dark.

With a wild cry of defiance Hyatt dashed from the woods into the road, and ran like a deer, pursued by the keepers.

The light gleaming brightly through the windows of an elegant mansion probably attracted his attention. He sprang over the fence and crossed the green, closely-trimmed lawn, and peered through the window.

An exultant look flashed into his face, and, drawing back a few steps, he flung himself headlong through the window.

Miss Archer, entertaining two gentleman friends, arose with a cry of alarm as Hyatt shook off the glass which had clung to his clothing and planted himself before her.

His eyes were fastened covetously on the gold chain about her neck, and with extended hands he pleaded for it. She shrank away; his eyes flashed, his fingers worked, his face became demoniac, and in another instant he would have been on her had not the keeper plunged through the shattered window and grasped him by the shoulders.

Desperately, madly, the maniac struggled, his wolfish eyes ever and anon returning to the gold chain about the lady's neck. He tore his own and the keeper's clothing to shreds in his wild struggle, and the lady visitor's clothing shared the same fate.

It was an awful scene. The combined strength of the three was insufficient to fully master him.

It was the climax of his madness, and he frothed at the mouth, and snapped and bit at them furiously.

But suddenly and unexpectedly his struggles ceased. He had strained until he had burst a blood vessel, his strength departed, the light faded from his eyes, life slowly left his frame.

Truly, gambling has much to answer for.

By employing rigid economy the Bureau of Engraving and Printing has met the scarcity of dyestuffs resulting from war in Europe and has now available enough pigments to color the Government's money and stamps for six months. By the end of that period Director Ralph believes colors made in America will be available, or that arrangements will be made for securing shipments from Germany. Director Ralph said the other day that for small lots of red dyes he has had to pay 75, 80 and 90 cents a pound, compared with 26 cents before the war began. The bureau has been able to quit the foreign market in producing one color and turned to American manufacturers. A vegetable dye used in coloring black ink, formerly imported from Germany, now is being purchased in large quantities from a Pennsylvania dyestuff plant.

NEWS OF THE DAY

An expert fruit packer estimates that the dried fruit yield of California for 1915 will reach a value of \$22,500,000. He estimates that the State will produce 70,000,000 pounds of dried peaches, 40,000,000 pounds of apricots, 130,000,000 pounds of prunes and 30,000,000 pounds of raisins.

William Finn and his family, in their cozy farmhouse on Pine Creek, near Lacrosse, Wis., ate, perhaps, the first rooster ever killed with a snowball in August. Rising early, Farmer Finn found the frost so thick he easily gathered up a snowball and shied it at a crowing rooster, with fatal results.

Struck by the fangs of a rattlesnake, while on a load of hay, Carl Hoblit, employed on the farm of Benjamin Bailey Gregory, S. Dak., saved his life by his presence of mind. Immediately after the fangs had penetrated his arm he cut open the wound with a pocketknife and then sucked out the poison.

Mrs. Griffin, a highly respected pioneer resident of Big Stone, S. Dak., and vicinity, celebrated her eightieth birthday by rowing a boat across Big Stone Lake, thus proving that she is one of the most remarkable of the aged residents of the State and Northwest. She is unusually sprightly for one of her years, and is as active as most women half her age.

Matthew McNulty, who was at one time known as the "village blacksmith" of Lafayette, Ind., has retired after being in the business for nearly six years. He estimates that he had shod more than a half million horses and mules in his career. He was a horseshoer during the days of the Wabash and Erie Canal and had the contract for shoeing the mules that provided the power for the boats between Toledo and Lafayette. McNulty accumulated a fortune of \$40,000 and says he will now retire to his farm.

Dr. W. T. Hornaday, well known for his activity in behalf of wild-life protection in America, communicates to Science the gratifying news that measures have been taken by the Dutch authorities to prevent the extermination of birds of paradise in the Dutch East Indies. Shooting is now limited to three species, except in certain areas where the shooting of any bird of paradise is prohibited.

Miss Alba Bennett, a fifteen-year-old girl, of San Francisco, is believed to hold the record for the amount of bread baked by a girl of her age during the summer months. During the last four months the girl has baked 100 loaves of bread. She is a member of the Avondale Girls' Baking Club, and has taken such an interest in the work that her mother has been relieved of all the bread-baking for the family for four months.

One of the newest pests brought to the United States from Europe is the starling, a bird somewhat resembling the blackbird, but with shorter tail and heavier body, says an exchange. The Massachusetts State ornithologist states that it has become established in nearly every county of that State, and in seven or eight other Eastern States, though first introduced in Central Park, New York City, only about twenty-five years ago. It multiplies rapidly, and is a serious menace as a destroyer of fruit.

There was a sensational sequel to the recent escape of two German ships' officers—Carl Morelang and Alfonso Griem—from the internment camp at Oldcastle, County Meath, where 600 other prisoners are confined. A merchant and auctioneer of Oldcastle was arrested and conveyed to Dublin, where he will be charged by court-martial with aiding and abetting the prisoners' escape. When recaptured in Cavan—about forty miles from the scene of their escape—the two Germans were disguised as priests. The internment camp is surrounded by high wire entanglements, through which the men cut a way, and it is guarded by sentries day and night.

The following item from a Chinese journal would indicate an increasing fondness in China for athletics: "Under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior the Temple of Architecture is being converted into a beautiful park. In the forest of evergreen trees an inclosure has been built to keep 140 deer from the summer palace in Jehol. There will be tennis courts, football grounds and lily ponds. Several pavilions have been erected at different points in the large compound inside the temple grounds, some built according to old Chinese fashions and others in accordance with modern forms. The museum in which ancient sacrificial instruments are kept will also be open to the visitors."

The weekly bulletin of the American Association of Commerce and Trade, of Berlin, contains interesting statements in regard to conditions in several important branches of German industry. It points out that German steamship lines are now inactive, except for irregular trade with Scandinavian ports, but that the companies are carrying out their programme for construction of vessels. Several large steamships have been launched and others have been sold at profitable prices. The general opinion is that these steamship lines, by reason of their efficiency and strong organizations, will be able to master the situation after the war. The outlook for foreign trade after the war is bright. It seems probable that Germany will be able to furnish good articles at low prices, on account of the intelligence of her merchants and the progress made in all branches of industry. The review of the chemical trade closed with the remark that its financial position was favorable. Almost all manufacturers have large funds in reserve, which makes it possible for them to await quietly the return of peaceful times.

TIMELY TOPICS

Negotiations are being completed by Charles J. Winkler, of Wilmington, Del., for the purchase of a tract of 400 acres along the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, at Delaware City, Del. He intends to place a herd of at least 200 goats on the farm and to equip it with a dairy, which will be an exact replica of the Alpine establishments.

Black gowns, appropriate to the occasion, will in the future be worn by Sacramento, Cal., grave diggers at the cemetery when they participate in funeral services and assist in the lowering of coffins. Commissioner Simmons made this order the other day, as he is of the opinion that the appearance of these men in their working clothes is hardly appropriate.

J. B. Elliott, Collector of Customs, Los Angeles, Cal., has been confronted with a novel problem. This was the amount of duty that should be assessed upon kangaroos and red tongue lizards. The problem presented itself in connection with the arrival of a shipment of kangaroos and lizards from the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales at Sydney, consigned to F. Weinberg, who conducts a wild animal farm near Eastlake Park. It was finally decided to assess a duty of 10 per cent. of the foreign value, which is \$10 a kangaroo and 50 cents a lizard.

Unless there are some eleventh-hour additions to the schedule, there will be no Eastern college or university football eleventh seen in action at the Panama-Pacific Exposition field in San Francisco this season. The intercollegiate game is gaining ground again on the Pacific Coast, and several institutions which have played Rugby during the last few years will return to the so-called American game of football this autumn. The University of California, Southern California and Nevada will all play the intercollegiate game and their schedules show contests with the larger institutions of the Northwest. The annual contest between the teams of California and Leland-Stanford will not be played this year.

The cultivation of tobacco in France is strictly controlled by the National Government and is practically confined to twenty-seven departments. Licenses are issued to communes or districts authorizing the cultivation of tobacco on a specific area. This area is then allotted to certain growers, and from the planting to the gathering of the crop every plant is under the supervision of Government officials. As the Government is the sole purchaser of the leaf when grown, it thus maintains a practical control over the amount that may be produced in a given year. No bounties are paid for the growing of tobacco, and the price paid is according to the quality of leaf grown and the requirements of the regime.

A statement recently issued by The Provincial Horticulturist of British Columbia gives some significant statistics concerning the production and importation of food

products in that province. The figures show that in 1914 there were produced in the province food supplies to the value of \$30,000,000, while during the same period imports consisting of produce which might have been raised in the province were valued at \$25,200,000. Twenty millions were imported from outside of Canada and \$5,000,000 worth from other parts of the Dominion. The livestock importations for 1914 totaled \$5,800,000, and dairy products \$4,500,000. Of these 40 per cent. came from outside of Canada and 60 per cent. from other provinces. The butter came mostly from Eastern Canada, Alberta and New Zealand.

The jumping powers of fleas have been much exaggerated, according to a bulletin on these insects recently issued by the Department of Agriculture. The species known as the human flea is probably the best jumper. According to Mitzmain, the maximum horizontal distance this species can jump is 13 inches, and the maximum vertical distance less than 8 inches. The question of the flea's jumping powers is of importance in connection with the spread of bubonic plague and other diseases of which this insect is the carrier. The Indian Plague Commission, which has investigated the habits of the Indian rat flea, finds its maximum horizontal jump to be only 5 inches, while Mitzmain records the maximum height to which it can jump as 3 1/8 inches. One species of flea, the "stick-tight," is nearly incapable of jumping.

According to experts who examined the hull recently, the caravel Santa Maria, replica of the ship which carried Columbus on his voyage of discovery in 1492, now lying at the foot of West 130th street, New York, is so weak in her timbers that she will not be able to make the voyage to the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco. The caravel left Chicago in the fall of 1913 in company with her sister ships, the Nina and the Pinta, to go through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic and then by the Panama Canal to the Pacific Ocean, stopping for a few days on the way at the principal cities. They got caught in the ice in the winter, and the Pinta and the Nina were so severely damaged that they were sent back last summer to their original anchorage in the Jackson Park lagoon in Chicago. The Santa Maria arrived there on Aug. 12, and it was hoped she might be fixed up to be towed to Colon and reach San Francisco before the closing of the exposition. The three vessels were presented to the United States by the Spanish Government in 1893 after the close of the Chicago fair and were left so long unattended that they started leaking and finally sank in the mud of the Jackson Park lagoon. A moving-picture concern paid to have them raised, and in return was allowed to use them for taking pictures. It would cost \$18,000 to make the Santa Maria seaworthy, according to Captain Charles S. Stephenson, a former Harvard coach who is in charge of the caravel.

THE LITTLE GEM TELEPHONE.



The transmitter in this telephone is made from the best imported parchment; with ordinary use will last a long time; can be made in any length by adding cord; the only real telephone for the money; each one put up in a neat box; fully illustrated, with full directions how to use them. Price, 12c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

MAMAS.

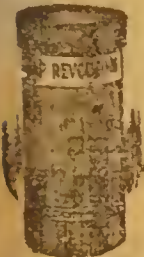


This interesting toy is one of the latest novelties out. It is in great demand. To operate it, the stem is placed in your mouth. You can blow into it, and at the same time pull or jerk lightly on the string. The mouth opens, and it then cries "Ma-ma," just exactly in the tones of a real, live baby. The sound is so human that it would deceive anybody.

Price 12c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.

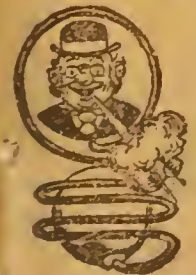


Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price by mail, 10c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

NEW SURPRISE NOVELTY.



Foxy Grandpa, Mr. Peewee and other comical faces artistically colored, to which is attached a long rubber tube, connected with a rubber ball, which can be filled with water, the rubber ball being carried in the pocket, a slight pressure on the bulb causes a long stream, the result can easily be seen.

Price, 15c.,

Postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

NEW TEN-CENT FOUNTAIN PEN.



One of the most peculiar and mystifying pens on the market. It requires no ink. All you have to do is to dip it in water, and it will write for an indefinite period. The secret can only be learned by procuring one, and you can make it a source of both pleasure and amusement by claiming to your friends what it can do and then demonstrating the fact. Moreover, it is a good pen, fit for practical use, and will never leak ink into your pocket, as a defective fountain pen might do.

Price, 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE FRIGHTFUL RATTLESNAKE!



To all appearance it is a harmless piece of coiled paper with a mouth-piece attachment, but upon placing it to one's mouth, and blowing into the tube, an imitation snake over two feet in length springs out of the roll like a flash of lightning, producing a whistling, fluttering sound that would frighten a wild Indian. We guarantee our rattlesnake not to bite, but would not advise you to play the game on timid women or delicate children. Each snake packed in a box. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

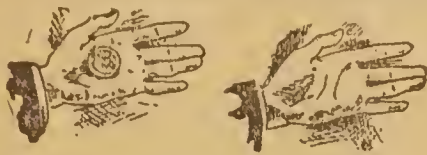
MAGIC MIRROR.



Fat and lean funny faces. By looking in these mirrors upright your features become narrow and elongated. Look into it sidewise and your phiz broadens out in the most comical manner. Size 3 1/2 x 2 1/4 inches, in a handsome imitation morocco case.

Price, 10c. each, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



VANISHING COINS.—A coin held in the palm of the hand is made to vanish when the hand is closed. Only one hand used. No practice required. Wonderful effect. Price, 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

DUPLEX BICYCLE WHISTLE.



This is a double whistling, producing loud but very rich, harmonious sounds, entirely different from ordinary whistles. It is just the thing for bicyclists or sportsmen, its peculiar double and resonant tones at once attracting attention. It is an imported whistle, handsomely nickel plated, and will be found a very useful and handy pocket companion. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen, 75c., sent by

mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

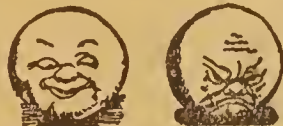
THE JOKER'S CIGAR.



The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in the center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparklets. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction, to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; 1 dozen, 90c., mailed, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

HOT AIR CARDS

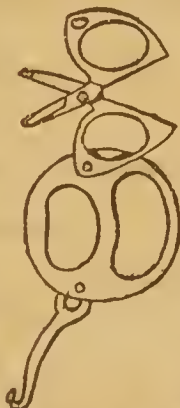


There are 8 cards in a pack. They are nicely printed on good bristol-board, and contain the funniest literature ever composed, such as "Professor Huggem, hugging and kissing done in the very latest style," a Liars License, a membership card for the Down and Out Club, and other comical poetry and prose. Every card guaranteed to make the girls giggle, the boys to laugh, and the old folks to roar. If you are looking for fun, get a pack.

Price 10 cents a pack, by mail, post-paid

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

HANDY TOOL



Every boy should possess one of these handy little instruments. It consists of a buttonhook, a cigar-cutter, scissors, key-ring and bottle-opener, all in one. The steel is absolutely guaranteed. Small catches hold it so that it cannot open in the pocket. Price by mail, post-paid, 15 cents each.

FRANK SMITH

383 Lenox Ave. New York City

THE HIDEOUS SPIDER.



Fun for everybody with one of these handsome brutes. His body is 3 inches long, beautifully enamelled green, with white ridges, yellow speckles, bulging eyes, and a big red mouth. He is armed with six legs and two upright feelers, made of flexible spiral springs. A dark, invisible thread attached to his body lets you shake him in the air before your friends' eyes, when the legs wiggle in a most natural, lifelike manner. Guaranteed to make any lady howl and to scare the bravest hero on earth out of his boots.

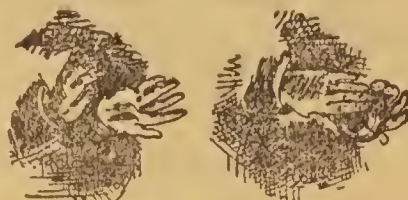
Price by mail, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



MAGIC CARD BOX.—A very cleverly made box of exchanging or vanishing cards. In fact, any number of tricks of this character can be performed by it. A very necessary magical accessory. Price, 15c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do. Price, 35c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE PEG JUMPER.



A very effective pocket trick, easily to be performed by any one. A miniature paddle is shown. Central holes are drilled through it. A wooden

peg is inside of the upper hole. Showing now both sides of the paddle, the performer causes, by simply breathing upon it, the peg to leave the upper hole, and appear in the middle one. Then it jumps to the lower hole, back to the middle one, and lastly to the upper hole. Both sides of the paddle are repeatedly shown.

Price by mail, 15c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE AUTOMATIC RUNNING MOUSE



This mouse is so nearly a perfect imitation of the live animal as to not only deceive the ladies, but to even deceive the

cat. Inside each mouse is a set of clock work which you wind up with a key, then place the mouse on the floor and it will run rapidly in every direction in a circle across the floor backward and forward as if to get away. Suddenly set it agoing in a room where there are ladies, and you will have the fun of hearing them scream and jump upon the chairs to escape the little rodent. This mechanical mouse is well worth 50c., but we will sell it for 30c., and send it by mail post-paid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

KANGAROO PADLOCK.



A handsome padlock stamped out of polished steel. It locks itself when the hasp is pressed down into the lock, but the puzzle is to unlock it. You can instantly unlock it with the key, but no one not in the secret can unlock it. You can slip the hasp through a friend's buttonhole and force him to wear it until you release it, although he may have the key to the lock; or a boy and girl can be locked together by slipping the hasp through a buttonhole of their clothing. Many other innocent and amusing jokes can be perpetrated with it upon your friends and acquaintances. It is not only a strong, useful padlock, but one of the best puzzles ever invented. Full printed instructions sent with each lock. They are a bonanza for agents, as they can be readily sold for 25 cents each. Our price, 15c.; 2 for 25c.; one dozen, \$1.20, sent by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

AUTOMATIC COPYING PENCIL.

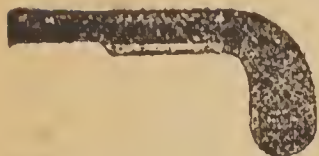


The importance of carrying a good reliable pencil need not be dwelt upon here. It is an absolute necessity with us all. The holder of this pencil is beautifully nicked with grooved box-wood handle, giving a firm grip in writing; the pencil automatically supplies the lead as needed while a box of these long leads are given with each pencil. The writing of this pencil is indelible the same as ink, and thus can be used in writing letters, addressing envelopes, etc. Bills of account or invoices made out with this pencil can be copied the same as if copying ink was used. It is the handiest pencil on the market; you do not require a knife to keep it sharp; it is ever ready, ever safe, and just the thing to carry.

Price of pencil, with box of leads complete, only 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen 90c. postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.



Made of nicely colored wood 5½ inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.



Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 ins. long. Price, 25c., postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MAGIC PIPE.



Made of a regular corn-cob pipe, with rubber figures inside; by blowing through the stem the figure will jump out. Made in following figures: rabbits, donkeys, cats, chickens, etc.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE FINGER THROUGH THE HAT.



Having borrowed a hat from your friend, push your finger through the crown of it, and it is seen to move about. Though very amusing to others, the owner of the hat does not see the joke, but thinks it means to destroy his hat; yet when it is returned it is perfectly uninjured. Price, 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE FOUNTAIN RING.



A handsome ring connected with a rubber ball which is concealed in the palm of the hand. A gentle squeeze forces water or cologne in the face of the victim while he is examining it. The ball can be instantly filled by immersing ring in water same as a fountain pen filler. Price by mail, postpaid, 12c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE PHANTOM FINGER.



As these fingers are cast in moulds in which a person's fingers have been encased, they are a lifelike model of the same. The finger can be made to pass through a person's hat or coat without injury to the hat or garment. It appears to be your own finger. A perfect illusion. Price, 15c.; 2 for 25c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



TRICK COIN HOLDER.

The coin holder is attached to a ring made so as to fit anyone's finger. The holder clasps tightly a 25c. piece. When the ring is

placed on the finger with the coin showing on the palm of the hand and offered in change it cannot be picked up. A nice way to tip people. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE MAGNETIC TOP.



A handsome metal, highly magnetized toy. A horseshoe and a spiral wire furnished with each top. When spun next to the wires, they make the most surprising movements. You can make wires of different shapes and get the most peculiar effects. Price, 5c., postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

IMITATION CUT FINGER.



A cardboard finger, carefully bandaged with linen, and the side and end are blood-stained. When you slip it on your finger and show it to your friends, just give a groan or two, use it up, and pull

a look of pain. You will get nothing but sympathy until you give them the laugh. Then duck! Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

PIN MOUSE.



It is made of cast metal and has the exact color, shape and size of a live mouse. Pinned on your or somebody else's clothes, will have a startling effect upon the spectators. The screaming fun had by this little novelty, especially in the presence of ladies, is more than can be imagined. If a cat happens to be there, there's no other fun to be compared with it.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c. FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

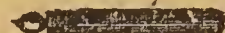
WINDOW SMASHERS.



The greatest sensation, just from Paris. A most wonderful effect of a smashing, breaking, falling pane or glass. It will electrify everybody. When you come home, slam the door shut and at the same time throw the discs to the floor. Every pane of glass in the house will at once seem to have been shattered. Price, by mail, postpaid, 35c., a set of six plates.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE SURPRISE FOUNTAIN PEN



A novelty of the greatest merit! It looks just like a genuine fountain pen. But it isn't. That's where the joke comes in. If

you take off the cover, a nice, ripe, juicy lemon appears. Then you give the friend you lend it to the merry "ha-ha." You might call it an everlasting joke because you can use it over and over again. Price, by mail, postpaid, 10c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

TRICK PURSE



One of the most innocent-looking little pocketbooks you ever saw. Hand it to your friend, and tell him to help himself. As he unfastens the button a spring inside causes the purse to fly open.

sending several coins up in the air before his astonished gaze. This is a real fun maker. You cannot afford to be without one.

Price, 25c. each, by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

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